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FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

A Drop of Ink

BY LIEUTENANT ROBERT · W · WARDEN ·

Allan Arnold Fox Is Author of "THE TEN DOCTORS," To Appear in Our Next Number

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A DROP OF INK

A MELODRAMATIC DETECTIVE STORY

By LIEUTENANT ROBERT W. WARDEN

CHAPTER ONE

THE DEAD

UPON the twenty-ninth day of January, at a trifle past four o'clock in the afternoon, a young man opened the door of the warehouse of Crumley & Co., Coenties Slip, near Water street. Closing it carefully behind him, in obedience to a sign which threatened instant decapitation to any one possessed of sufficient boldness to leave it ajar, he tapped lightly, and in a peculiar way, upon the glass partition which divided the office of the firm from that portion of the warehouse in which goods were stored.

At the sound of the tapping from within the office there immediately appeared a second youth, who, laying down his pen and closing a large account-book with which he was at the moment engaged, opened the door in the glass partition and joined the tapper in the store beyond.

"Hello, Elmer! Is that you, old fellow?" he exclaimed, shaking the visitor heartily by the hand. "Why didn't you come right into the office at once instead of bringing me out here in the cold?"

The question was well put.

Within the office of Crumley & Co., which was neatly carpeted and furnished with partitions of shining mahogany and glittering brass, a fire glowed in a comfortable stove, while out in the storage-room there was nothing but bare floors, hatchway and rope, with pork and beef barrels, piled one above the other, tier upon tier, from floor to ceiling, and the lack of artificial heat rendered the apartment cheerless and cold.

"Because I wanted to say a word to you in private, Arthur," replied the visitor, with some slight show of

embarrassment. "I saw that the old man was not around, and didn't care to talk to you with Dick Shortliff, the bookkeeper, taking in all I had to say. I guess it won't hurt either of us to stand out here for a moment, cold as it is."

To look at the pair one would surely have voted this last observation correct. At their age young men are not over-sensitive to heat or cold. This was twenty-five and twenty-six respectively. The former being the age of Elmer Romayne, the latter that of Arthur Lyman, nephew of John Crumley, the sole surviving partner of Crumley & Co., and his most intimate friend. Both were perfect types of youthful impetuosity, and of manly strength. That Arthur Lyman was tall and dark, and Elmer Romayne short, with a leaning toward corpulence, with light hair and merry gray eye, formed the points of difference most marked.

Their social positions differed to a marked degree. Elmer Romayne, left without father or mother at a tender age, was a clerk at a small salary in a shipping-office on lower Broadway. Arthur Lyman, on the contrary, although likewise an orphan, was an inmate of the household of his uncle, the rich Mr. Crumley, and was now, it was rumored, to inherit, under his dead father's will, a large estate.

"Well, old fellow, speak it out," said Arthur pleasantly, regarding his friend's embarrassment with a slightly-amused smile. "You think you can't come to our little entertainment to-night? That's what's the matter with you, is it not?"

"That's just it, Arthur, and I thought I'd slip around and tell you before you closed up. I hated to say so, and didn't know just how to begin, but you are a veritable Yankee for guessing, it seems."

"Why can't you come? I don't believe your reason amounts to anything at all."

"Perhaps it wouldn't to you, but it amounts to a good deal with me. To be frank, I have no clothes good enough to wear. It will be a swell affair, and I can't make a show of myself before your fine friends. If I had a dress-suit it would be another thing."

"Humph! Don't you suppose I thought of that when I invited you, eh? If you'd have just kept quiet for another half-hour I would have been around to your place and have arranged the whole thing."

"Upon my word, I don't see how you could."

"Don't you? Well, it is very simple. I have provided two full-dress suits for the occasion. One for you, the other for me. You are to come up to the house with me, rig yourself in my room, and join our little gathering this evening. If you won't do this for me, Elmer, you are not the friend I think you—that's all."

The face of the shipping-clerk flushed scarlet.

"Arthur, you are very kind," he stammered, "but I can't accept any favors like that."

"What's the reason you can't? I'd accept as much from you, almighty quick, if our positions were reversed."

"Perhaps, but you will come in for your father's estate before the year is out, and then——"

"There! That shows just how much you know!" exclaimed the young man, a shadow passing over his face. "I don't like to talk about my private affairs to any one, but I'm so full of them to-night that I feel as though I must speak or burst, and I'm going to tell you exactly how I stand.

"The money which my father left to Mr. Crumley, my uncle, in charge for me, ought by rights to have been paid over nine months ago. **He hasn't done it. Do you want to know why?"**

"Be careful. Don't tell me anything you are going to be sorry for by and by."

"I won't be sorry for it. I've borne this state of affairs just as long as I intend to. If something isn't done soon I shall bring the whole matter before the surrogate's court. The reason John Crumley hasn't paid me the money, Elmer, is because he hasn't got it. I begin to believe that he has sunk my whole estate in foolish speculations in Wall Street."

"Never! Arthur, you must be mistaken. John Crumley is rated at a million. You ought to be careful what you say."

"I don't care. I spoke my mind to him this morning, and I'm going to speak it to you now. My uncle is a ruined man, and I know it. More than that, he drinks so much that he keeps himself in a state totally unfit for business all the while.

"Only this morning I had a talk with him, and demanded my money. He admitted that he couldn't pay it, that he had speculated with my funds.

"I wouldn't care for that if he was disposed to do what's right, but he isn't. Even while we were talking his lawyer called and paid him fifty thousand dollars in bills. It was his award by the courts from an old law-suit of my father's which has just been settled. I demanded that he give the money to me, as the suit related to my property, but instead of complying with my very reasonable request, he laughed in my face.

"I feel sometimes as though I could kill John Crumley, although he is my uncle, for the wrong he has done me."

"Hush; hush, Arthur! Control yourself! Some one might hear you make that threat."

But the warning came too late. The words spoken in rashness had already been heard. Even as they were uttered, the office-door opened, and a young man of prim, starched appearance stepped out upon the stone floor. It was Richard Shortliff, an employee of Crumley & Co., in the capacity of head bookkeeper and confidential clerk. Between Arthur Lyman and this man there had been a standing enmity for years. Not that Richard Shortliff was other than a virtuous member of society. He was all of that. A church-member, a strong temperance advocate, a man most expert at his business, most devoted to the interests of the firm by which he was employed.

Though Richard Shortliff was deep in the confidence of his uncle, Arthur could not endure him, and he made no effort to conceal his dislike. That this individual should have overheard his foolish threat was unfortunate. Yet in his present excited state the young man felt utter indifference to the fact. He ceased speaking, however, and waited for him to pass.

"I'm going now, Arthur," said the bookkeeper, in the measured tone it was his custom to assume. "I doubt if Mr. Crumley will return, and as I have let John, our porter, go home to a sick wife, I shall look to you to close the store."

"Very well, I'll attend to it," was the short reply, and Shortliff passed out into the street.

"Do you suppose he heard you?" asked Elmer in a whisper.

"I don't know and I don't care. I meant what I said, so it don't matter whether he did or not."

"You ought not to say such things, they might be misconstrued."

"I tell you my uncle is a scoundrel. The world would be better if he were dead."

Upon the countenance of Arthur Lyman was depicted both rage and hate.

Knowing him as he did, it pained his friend beyond expression to see him thus give way to feelings so utterly unworthy of the noble nature of which he believed him possessed.

"I can't stay to listen to such talk as this," he said, hurriedly. "Besides, I have been away from the office longer than I intended. I must go back at once."

"But you'll come to the party, Elmer? It is the introduction of my Cousin Louise into society, you know. Louise and I are—are—well, we are pretty good friends, and I'm sure she would be disappointed if so old a friend of mine as yourself were to be absent. So you'll come, old fellow, and forget my rash and wicked words. I'll finish up what I have to do and come around to the office for you in an hour's time."

"Well, then, since you are so pressing. Upon my word, after your display of temper, I'm half afraid to leave you to go home alone."

They parted, and an hour later the shipping office in which he was employed, having closed for the night, Elmer Romayne stood upon the steps, watching the homeward crowd surging up Broadway, waiting for the appearance of his friend.

"Something must have delayed him," he muttered, as he gazed up the street and down. "Guess I'll run around to Crumley's and head him off, although just like as not we'll pass each other on the way."

Hurrying down Broadway to Beaver street he passed into Broad, and thence by way of Water street into Coenties Slip.

Although it had now begun to grow quite dark there still remained light enough for Romayne to see as he turned the corner that a crowd had collected about the door of the warehouse of Crumley & Co. Through the heart of the man there went a sudden thrill—a foreboding of evil to come. Had anything happened to Arthur? Had—but no; he refused even to grant the horrible suspicion admittance to his mind. Running at full speed down the street, he elbowed his way through the crowd.

"For heaven's sake, what's the matter?" he demanded of those who pressed about the warehouse door.

"Why, it's murder, young feller!" blurted out a burly truckman. "There's a man dead inside there—in the office of Crumley & Co."

Romayne did not pause to hear another word. Pushing his way through the crowd, he dashed like a madman into the warehouse, about the doors of which they pressed. Through the glass dividing the office from the storage-room he could see three men and an old woman bending over some object stretched upon the floor. One was Richard Shortliff, the bookkeeper; another, a policeman; the third, a grave-looking individual in citizen's clothes. They appeared to be excited, and no wonder, for before them lay that which was calculated to excite the most unimpressible man on earth.

It was the head of the firm of Crumley & Co., with a wound upon his forehead, stretched dead upon the office floor.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DETECTIVE

ELMER ROMAYNE had not left his friend more than one-half hour when a man, whose age might be fixed at forty, might have been observed leaving the office of a well-known firm of stock brokers on Broad street just below Wall.

He was of medium height, with sharp, inquisitive features, which bore upon them an air of gravity withal, brown hair, keen, penetrating eyes, protruding chin, and short upper lip covered by a spreading mustache.

His dress was plain and in accordance with the season, while as an extra protection—for the day was bitterly cold—he wore a handsome silk muffler closely wrapped about his throat. Turning his footsteps toward the East River, this man moved hurriedly toward the ferries located at the end of the Battery Park. His name was Timothy Chase, a detective.

The wind which blew straight from the river-front cut the face of our pedestrian like a knife. It reminded him that he had for two hours past been seated in a warm room; it reminded him also of the unpleasant possibility of taking a violent cold, with suggestions of pneumonia and weeks of confinement in bed.

"See here, my friend, this will never do," he muttered. "I've got to get something to warm me up inside to counteract this beastly air without."

Now, unlike many of his fellows, Chase rarely indulged in intoxicating drink. That is, in anything stronger than a glass of beer or so; but upon a night like this he felt that it could in no way harm him to try medicinally the warming effects of a hot whisky. He had reached the corner of Broad and Pearl streets upon arriving at this conclusion, and upon the side of the way opposite to where he stood he perceived a saloon of the ordinary type, which seemed to offer promise of affording him precisely what he sought, and went in.

A man stood hugging the bar-room stove, clothed in filthy rags from head to foot; was, in fact, as dirty a specimen of the genius "bum" as the city could produce.

"Hot Scotch, if you please," said Chase.

The bartender reached for the bottle required, but as he moved toward the hot-water urn, his eyes fell on the tramp.

"Now plame me if dot fellow ain't got de cheek of the deuce!" he exclaimed, in the accent of the Holland-Americans of New York. "I puts him owit mit de side-door und here he comes back mit de front."

But the wretched tramp who hugged the stove seemed utterly oblivious to these remarks. In fact, he appeared to be suffering, unless indeed it was intoxication under which he labored, for he was swaying from side to side, and making the most horrible faces.

"I'll bet you've been drinking mit dot pottle und glass!" cried the bartender in a rage, glancing at the same time at a black bottle and an empty tumbler which rested upon the bar not a great way from where the detective stood.

The bartender sat down the half-mixed hot Scotch by the side of the water-urn and sprang toward the tramp at the stove. At that same instant from that wretched specimen of humanity there went up a loud yell of despair.

"I'm poisoned! I'm poisoned!"

Bending himself almost double, with sharp cries of pain he fell in convulsions upon the bar-room floor. At the same instant the door on the Pearl street side was flung violently open, and a police officer, known to the detective, rushed into the saloon.

"Some whisky, quick!" he cried, rushing up to the bar. "There's been a murder around in Coenties Slip, and—Mr. Chase! You here?"

"Did you say murder?"

With this question upon his lips, Detective Chase, forgetting the tramp, who was still groaning horribly from the floor, had stepped to the officer's side.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Crumley, the produce merchant, around in

the Slip, has been murdered in his office. That is, if he's actually dead. I thought I'd try what a little whisky would do—maybe he ain't actually gone."

A murder! It was the very excitement for which the detective had longed. In another moment, with the officer at his side, Timothy Chase entered the office of Crumley & Co. in Coenties Slip.

The story of the policeman, told during the short interim, had been as follows:

He had been passing the warehouse, when the loud shrieks of a woman had attracted his attention. They came from the doorway, where one Mrs. Malone, a caretaker of offices and well known in the neighborhood, stood beckoning to him and calling frantically for help. Entering, he was informed that upon opening the office door in performance of her nightly duties she had discovered the body of John Crumley, the proprietor of the warehouse, either dead or in a fit upon the floor. As the man still breathed, the officer had rushed to the saloon for whisky in hopes of reviving him. Had he remained at his post until help could have been summoned it would have been just as well. For, as he entered the office, it needed but one glance on the part of Chase to see that the unfortunate gentleman had breathed his last.

The body lay upon the floor, with the face turned upward and inward facing the desks. A wound upon the scalp, just above the forehead, which had bled profusely, seemed to offer a clue to the immediate cause of death. That it had been caused by a heavy stone ink-stand, thrown by the hand of some person unknown, also seemed evident, for that formidable missile now lay, broken in three pieces, upon the floor. The ink which it had once contained was red, and of a peculiar shade.

"Lock the inside door and shut out the crowd, officer," said the detective sternly. "This is a bad affair and must be looked into. Hello! whom have we here?"

Through the crowd, which had forced its way into the storage-room outside the office, a man now hurriedly disentangled himself, and, with pale face and frightened look, dashed into their midst.

"What's all this about?" he demanded excitedly. "These people talk of murder. What is the meaning of this?"

He had caught sight of the body upon the floor, upon which he gazed with staring eyes, his countenance now the hue of death.

"It is Mr. Shortliff, the bookkeeper, sor," whispered kind-hearted Mrs. Malone, who had been sobbing and wailing in true Irish style. Timothy Chase, taking the man gently by the arm, drew him to one side.

"Can you offer any explanation of this, sir?" he said in a quiet voice, seeing that his agitation was extreme. "This unfortunate gentleman was found as you now see him by yonder woman a few minutes ago. You are familiar with this establishment. Can you throw any light upon this terrible crime?"

There was an instant of hesitation.

"Am I compelled to speak?" he asked at length.

"By no means. Unless you wish to do so in defense of yourself——"

"Of myself! Sir, you mistake. It was not I who threatened the life of yonder man, but Arthur Lyman, his nephew. I heard him with my own ears not an hour ago, and—— Ah! another witness. There—there is a person who can testify that I have spoken the truth."

It was Elmer Romayne who stood without, peering through the glass partition at the body upon the office floor. Upon his face there was imprinted a look of horror.

CHAPTER THREE

ARTHUR IS ARRESTED FOR MURDER

THE entertainment given by the fashionable Mrs. Crumley was the event of the season. Its occasion was the introduction of her daughter Louise in the social world.

Nine o'clock arrived, and carriage after carriage began to roll to the door. The house was lighted from basement to roof. In the conservatory, hidden behind a mass of tropical foliage, New York's most noted orchestra discoursed ravishing music and in the elegantly furnished salons the butterflies of society flitted to and fro.

But despite all these preparations there was trouble in the house of Crumley. It was confined, however, to the private apartments of the family above-stairs. Here Madame Crumley—she liked to be called madame now, though in the days when her husband kept a humble butcher's stall in the Washington Market plain Mrs. was quite good enough—bemoaned the significant fact that her lord and master had not returned.

Upon a rustic bench Louise Crumley, the fair débutante of the evening, sat facing her cousin, Arthur Lyman, who, in full evening costume, standing erect before her, gazed upon her radiant figure with mournful eyes.

"I must have an answer, Louise," the young man whispered; "before you plunge into the whirl of society dancing I must know my fate."

The eyes beneath him were coyly lifted until they rested with melting tenderness upon his face.

"Arthur, you know that I love you deeply, truly, but my father prohibits our engagement until I have had at least one year in society. What, then, am I to do?"

"Swear that you will be true to me, come what may," whispered the youth, kneeling at her feet and seizing the dainty white hand within his own. Then he added:

"Oh, Louise, you do not know your father as I know him. You do not know the shadow that hangs above this house. Promise, darling! Promise here and now that nothing shall come between us."

"Arthur! for goodness' sake, where are you? There's no one to receive the gentlemen. Is it not enough that Mr. Crumley has not yet come home, that I'm to be left to bear the whole burden of this entertainment alone?"

It was Madame Crumley.

Her shrill voice, pitched in a key even higher than usual, was to be heard among the shrubbery behind which the lovers were hid.

"Go, Arthur," was the whispered response. "I give my promise—I will be true to you till death."

Seizing her in his arms, the young man kissed her passionately and tore himself away. For a short space the young girl remained motionless; her bosom heaved, her face suffused with blushes, her thoughts those of dawning love alone. And the strains of a dreamy waltz floated over her flowery retreat, mingled with the sounds of dancing feet from the gay salon beyond.

"I love him! I love him! I love him!" she murmured. "I love Arthur more than I love my life! What can he mean by his gloomy forebodings—by his talk of the shadow resting over us—by——"

"Tap, tap, tap!"

From the conservatory window by her side there came a low rapping upon the glass. Springing to her feet, she turned and faced the window with a startled air. And no wonder! This window was, as she well knew, fully fifteen feet from the ground—the sidewalk of the cross street cornering with the mansion—and yet there could be distinctly seen a face pressed against the glass.

Before she had time to call for help or even utter a sound the sash was softly raised and a most singular creature stepped softly into the room. It was a young man, dressed in worn, shabby garments, a mere apology for a hat and shoes, which were but insufficient to conceal the mud-stained toes they covered.

But it was not the clothes which rendered the intruder peculiar. It was his figure—a shape most horribly deformed.

"Hush! Hush, miss! I will not harm you," whispered this singular being in quick, anxious tones. "I have come to warn Mr. Lyman. I——"

But the sentence remained unfinished. With a piercing cry of terror the girl had fled from the conservatory to the salon beyond. She heard nothing of these hurried words, but had yielded to a sense of overwhelming fear. The strange creature did not seek to follow. A look of sorrow overspread his distorted face.

"Well, they're afraid of me," he murmured, "but anyhow I did my best. There's no use trying no more. I've put my foot in it, an' better be goin', or some of them guys in the parlor will be for runnin' me in."

As he spoke he slipped through the open window, and, with the nimbleness of a cat, slid by the aid of a small water-spout to the street below.

The clock struck ten. Another tango was just started.

At the head of the brilliantly lighted salon stood Arthur Lyman, the envy of all who beheld him. And justly. His cousin, the débutante of the evening, stood waiting for the first strains of the music by his side. From the concealment of the conservatory those strains came forth. But there seemed a singular reluctance on the part of the dancers to yield to the seductive measure of the music.

There was a commotion in the reception-room, opening off the main salon.

"Arthur, pray see what all this means," exclaimed stout Madame Crumley, bustling up.

Lyman, leaving his partner, entered the reception-room with rapid strides, the guests, who seemed to comprehend that something had gone wrong, pressing after him and gathering at the portiere which separated it from the salon. To his astonishment there stood a grave-looking man, who had not taken the trouble to remove his hat. By his side was Richard Shortliff, the head bookkeeper at his uncle's warehouse in Coenties' Slip.

"Ah, here he comes," said the bookkeeper. "He has saved us the necessity of interrupting the ball."

"Mr. Shortliff! What does this mean? Is anything wrong with my uncle? Is——"

"That's your man, Mr. Chase," said the bookkeeper, turning to his companion and completely ignoring Arthur's astonished queries.

"Are you Arthur Lyman?"

With a quick stride forward the stranger had reached his side. Arthur nodded.

"Then I arrest you for the willful murder of your uncle, John Crumley, in his office on Coenties Slip."

He snapped a pair of handcuffs about the young man's wrists and drew his arm firmly within his own. At the portiere connecting the reception-room with the salon beyond the guests of the ball crowded, their faces expressing horror and blank dismay.

Arthur Lyman drew himself up, startled.

"It is a lie!" he shouted in tones loud enough for all to hear. "If John Crumley has been murdered it was by other hands than mine."

"Do you dare say so?" exclaimed the intruder, Timothy Chase, now seizing him with iron grip by the manacled wrists.

"Here is a witness who tells a different story, young man, and, unless I greatly mistake, one much nearer the truth."

Facing the astonished guests who crowded at the entrance to the salon, he pointed meaningly to a bright red spot in the center of the manacled right hand of Arthur Lyman, now held aloft in plain view of all.

It was a drop of carmine ink, and had formed itself into a small red blot upon the upraised palm.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON THE ELEVATED

"BRING in that young man," Detective Chase had said to the policeman as Shortliff pointed to Elmer outside the partition.

"Who is he?" he demanded of the bookkeeper in a whisper as the officer turned to obey.

"A friend of Arthur Lyman's. His name is Elmer Romayne."

"Why do you think he can throw light on this affair?"

"I did not say that. I said that he heard Arthur Lyman threaten the deceased as well as I; in fact, it was he whom Arthur addressed. I simply chanced to overhear what passed between them."

"I'll question him," replied Chase, "for here he is."

The detective turned to Elmer, who, accompanied by the policeman, now entered the office door. Upon his face was depicted the utmost horror, for Elmer also remembered with dreadful distinctness his friend's rash words.

"You are Elmer Romayne?" asked Timothy Chase in a low tone, drawing the young man to one side.

"Yes, sir. That is my name."

"And I am a police detective. My name is Chase. I would like to learn what knowledge you have of this affair."

"What knowledge I have? I don't know anything about it. I only dropped in here to see a friend."

"Your friend, Arthur Lyman, the nephew of Mr. Crumley?"

"Yes, sir. He was to meet me—that is, I was to meet him, and—and——"

"Which do you mean?" said the detective calmly, seeing that the embarrassment of the young man was great. "Were you to meet him here or was your appointment at some other place?"

"It was at the office where I work, around on Broadway."

"And your friend not keeping his appointment, you came here after him?"

"Yes, sir, that was it."

"Mr. Romayne, did you ever hear your friend, Arthur Lyman, threaten the life of his uncle?"

"I? Oh, no, sir."

It was a lie—a lie to shield a friend. If any form of untruth is excusable, it is when spoken with such intent as was this. But Elmer Romayne was unused to lying, and as he uttered the words he colored to the roots of his hair.

"You don't speak the truth, young man," said the detective sternly. "Therefore I shall question you no more for the present. Oblige me with your name and address."

Elmer hastily wrote his address upon a card and handed

it to the detective, who again moved toward the body of the dead merchant upon the floor. Stooping, he picked up the heavy stone ink-stand and examined it critically. It had contained red ink, and its contents had been spilled upon the floor. Timothy Chase turned to the bookkeeper as he spoke again:

"Whose ink-stand is this?"

"Arthur Lyman's," replied Shortliff.

"Was Mr. Lyman here when you went out, Mr. Shortliff?"

"Yes, sir. He was talking with his friend."

"And as you passed them you heard his threats against the life of the deceased?"

"Yes, sir. - That was it."

"What did he say? Can you give me his exact words?"

"Arthur was complaining of the way in which his uncle had treated him. 'I could kill John Crumley' were the words he used."

To this Timothy Chase made no response, but, stooping down, examined the wound with deep attention.

"This never caused death," he muttered. "Ha! what have we here? Blood!"

It was a tiny stream of blood, which he had not before observed, projecting itself along the matting on the office floor from beneath the back of the deceased.

"Help me to turn the body, officer," he said, addressing the policeman. "We must see what this means."

The policeman complying with this request, the body was turned upon its face.

In the back, directly opposite the region of the heart, the clothing had been penetrated by a dagger.

"This is more like it. The man has been stabbed," said the detective, as with the aid of the officer he turned the body again. "It must be reported at headquarters at once. Officer, I leave you in charge. Mr. Shortliff, you had better accompany me, and that young man also."

He cast his eye about the office for Elmer Romayne. But Elmer had gone. Watching his opportunity while the attention of all had been directed to the body, he had quietly slipped out of the door.

"I'll have to ask you to excuse me," said the bookkeeper with a slight show of nervousness. "I have an important engagement."

"But I can't excuse you. I may decide to arrest this Arthur Lyman and need your identification. Where does the young man reside?"

"At No. — Fifth avenue—his uncle's house."

"Of course we won't find him there."

"I'm not so sure of that. They are to have a ball at the house to-night which he had arranged to attend. If you can excuse me for an hour I will engage to meet you at police headquarters in that length of time."

"Well, I suppose that will have to satisfy me," said the detective, looking at his watch. "I shall expect you to be prompt, Mr. Shortliff, for there is no telling how this affair may turn."

Passing down Coenties Slip, silent and deserted, to the corner of Front street, Shortliff was about to turn into that thoroughfare when a man sprang out from the shadow of a warehouse doorway and grasped him by the arm. His face was blotched and bloated and he was thinly clad in garments better adapted to summer than winter wear.

"I've done the job, Mr. Shortliff," he exclaimed hoarsely, with a wary look about. The street was to all appearance utterly deserted save for themselves. Above rose the structure of the elevated railroad, which here takes an abrupt curve from Front street into Coenties Slip. Close to where they stood was a farmer's wagon loaded with hay, which, having lost a wheel, lay tilted over on the sidewalk, upon which had fallen a portion of the hay. Richard Shortliff, tearing his arm from the man's grasp, stared at him in unfeigned amazement.

"You — have — done — the — job," he repeated slowly. "Jack Butters, you lie!"

"No, I don't lie, either. You just came from the store. I seed you. You know old Crumley's dead, and I want the reward."

"Do you mean to tell me that you killed Mr. Crumley?"

"I put him out of the way—of course I did. One would think you were playin' off surprised. Say, when am I to come for my pay?"

"I don't know what you mean," answered Shortliff, trembling violently. "Mr. Crumley has been murdered in his office, it is true, and in another hour his nephew, Arthur Lyman, will be arrested for the deed."

"Arthur Lyman!"

"Yes. There is proof enough against him to satisfy any one. There is no doubt that he is the guilty man. You are lying to me, Jack Butters, and I don't want to hear any more of it. But if you will hold your jaw and let this arrest go through I will pay you a thousand dollars tomorrow."

As he spoke, Richard Shortliff, turning his back abruptly upon the man, hurried off down Front street in the direction of Broad.

"Hey! hold up!" shouted Butters, running after him. "You can't shake me off like that, Dick Shortliff! If you don't pay I'll yell out the whole business so that every one can hear."

"Take your pay, then!" hissed Shortliff as he planted a stunning blow between the eyes of the angered man, felling him to the pavement.

Then taking to his heels he ran off down the deserted street at the top of his speed. Without stopping to look behind him to ascertain the effect of his blow, Richard Shortliff made the best of his way to Whitehall street and ascended the steps of the South Ferry station of the elevated railroad. The Third avenue train, leaving a few moments later, found him standing upon the platform with his back against the car.

The door of the next car was opened and a man stepped upon the platform and to Richard Shortliff's side. It was the ill-looking Mr. Butters. His face was covered with blood from the effect of the blow he had received, while fierce anger blazed from his eyes.

"I owe you one, Dick Shortliff!" he muttered, thrusting his bloated countenance close to that of the bookkeeper. "I owe you one, and, by heaven, you'll find I am a man that pays my debts! I want that money now, do you understand? And I want two thousand instead of one!"

Pale as death, Richard Shortliff faced him in utter silence. The expression that overspread his countenance was that of some animal brought to bay. Beside themselves there was no one on the platform.

"Why don't you speak?" shouted Butters, raising his arm as though to strike. "If I can kill one man I can kill two, and I'll kill you, Shortliff, if you don't change your tune."

"Hush; hush! You are mad! Do you want to finish us both?"

The words came jerkily as Shortliff moved a step, putting the man Butters between himself and the gate.

"I won't hush! You struck me, and I'll fix you for it!"

"You'll go where you can torment me no more, Butters!" hissed Shortliff between his clenched teeth, and, darting suddenly forward, he seizsd the man by the throat with his left hand and pinioned him against the platform

rail. With his disengaged hand he flung open the gate and thrust Butters off the car. The train had just entered upon the great curve at Coenties Slip and the platform extended a little beyond the edge of the track. As the man fell there broke from his lips a yell of despair.

CHAPTER FIVE

JOHNNY TAWS

NO sooner had Richard Shortliff and Butters left the side of the broken hay-wagon than there emerged from among the hay a being in appearance altogether strange. It was a boy, greatly deformed.

Arthur Lyman in trouble!" he murmured. "That was what they said. And they called him a murderer! As though one so good could be guilty of so horrible a deed!"

For a moment he stood irresolute. Then his eyes, turning up Coenties Slip in the direction of the warehouse of Mr. Crumley, encountered the little crowd of persons who still lingered about the door. Running nimbly over the pavement toward them, he plucked by the sleeve a burly truckman who was talking animatedly with the porter of the adjoining store.

"What is it, Jack?" he exclaimed. "What's happened in Crumley's? What's all the row about?"

"Hello, Johnny Taws! Is that you? Why, it's murder that's the matter. That's what's the row."

There was not a man in the entire neighborhood who did not know the wretched cripple, and from the roughest among them there was at all times for Johnny a pleasant word. Johnny was born a nobody, and had succeeded in maintaining that enviable position ever since. His earliest recollections were of the foundling asylum on Randall's Island, following which were some years in the custody of a professional beggar, who occupied choice apartments in a Baxter street tenement. His especial line now was junk—junk on a somewhat limited scale. He had an acquaintance with every business house in Coenties Slip and the streets adjoining, and removed their waste paper each day. And many was the nickel and dime bestowed in charity upon Johnny by the good-natured clerks about the Slip, among whom Arthur Lyman had always stood his especial friend. In short, Johnny Taws was one of the institutions of Coenties Slip, and was known to every one doing business therein, from the richest merchant to the poorest longshoreman who hung around its docks.

As the truckman spoke, Johnny's big eyes opened wide.

"Murder! Who's murdered?" he whispered in an agitated tone.

"Why, old Crumley, to be sure—the meanest man in the Slip. It's a small loss, I say, though I'm mighty sorry for that bright lad, his nephew, all the same."

"Do you mean Arthur Lyman?"

"Of course I do."

"Gee!"

"There goes the detective what's onto the case now," whispered the truckman as Timothy Chase, buttoning up his overcoat, emerged from the door. "He's a good bull, he is. It will go hard with Arthur Lyman, once he gets his grip on him."

And John Taws waited to hear no more. Shambling off down the street, he returned to the broken hay wagon. Whether Johnny regarded the load which had fallen from the broken hay wagon as a bed especially designed for his accommodation or not we cannot say; but certain it is that at the moment in which Richard Shortliff had encountered his friend Mr. Butters, he had been lying upon this by no means uncomfortable bed, half covered with the hay. It was thus that he had chanced to overhear the conversation which passed between the pair which had occasioned him so much disturbance of mind. Johnny Taws leaned against the forward wheel of the wagon.

"I ought to warn him that the cops is after him," he muttered. "He was the best to me of any feller in the Slip. If he got mad and chucked the ink-stand at old Crumley no one can blame him. I don't believe he meant to kill him and I'll help him if I can. But maybe he didn't do it," he added musingly, "and if the bulls are after him they'll frame him sure. I'll go up to his house on Fifth avenue, where he gave me the clothes, and just tell him he'd better light out at once."

From this it would appear that if Arthur Lyman had no other friend in Coenties Slip, he at least had a friend in Johnny Taws. Now, Johnny was a young man of action. When he once made up his mind to do a thing he usually did it at once. As he arrived at the conclusion noted above and was about to start to put his purpose into execution an up-bound train swept around the curve of the elevated road. Johnny, attracted by the sound, raised his eyes to the track.

As he did so he heard a loud cry above, and a man fell from the platform of one of the cars, landing upon the top of the pile of hay. His falling body was followed by what appeared to be a wad of paper, which dropped at the feet of the boy.

"Great gosh! how fortunate!" exclaimed Johnny, running toward the end of the load of hay upon which the man had fallen. "Are you hurt, mister? It's blame lucky this hay was here or you'd have been killed sure."

"No, I ain't hurt!" growled the man, scrambling off the top of the load; "but I'll hurt somebody else before this night is over or I'll know the reason why!"

Leaping to the pavement, the man started to run across the Slip in the direction of Hanover Square.

"Well, by gracious! I wouldn't want to take that chance," muttered the boy as the runner disappeared in the distance. As he spoke his eyes chanced to light upon the wad of paper which had fallen from the train with the man and now lay upon the sidewalk at his feet. Yielding to a natural feeling of curiosity, Johnny picked up the paper and held it to the light of a neighboring street lamp. Then his great eyes opened wider than ever before. The wad of paper was nothing less than a great roll of bills, all of the denomination of one thousand dollars and fastened together by an elastic band.

CHAPTER SIX

BUTTERS TURNS UP

THE guests at Madame Crumley's ball crowded into the little reception-room in a state of intense excitement. Arthur Lyman, the nephew of the master of the house, had been arrested on a charge of murdering his uncle! It seemed almost beyond belief. Meanwhile Madame Crumley had fainted, falling, a heap of corpulence, blazing jewels and shimmering silk, to the floor of the reception-room. But her daughter at this trying juncture evinced a character scarce to be looked for in one so young. Stepping up to Arthur Lyman, she laid her delicate white hand upon his manacled wrists, and, turning, faced the guests.

"He is innocent," she said slowly and distinctly. "I want all present to understand that I believe Arthur Lyman, my

affianced husband, wholly incapable of this terrible deed." The guests were lost in wonder. The announcement of an engagement of marriage under such circumstances was entirely irregular, so far as society's rules were concerned.

"God bless you, Louise!" whispered Arthur. "You are a dear, brave girl, but it is no more than I should have expected. You are my affianced wife from this moment. Nothing but death shall part us now."

For the moment Detective Timothy Chase had obligingly turned his head away. He had a kind heart hidden beneath a rough exterior; and, what was more, there was once a time when he had been in love himself. Now, however, having no desire to prolong this painful scene, he touched Arthur Lyman lightly upon the arm. In another moment they were gone.

Meanwhile the servants and some of the lady guests having come to the assistance of Madame Crumley, that lady was borne to her room. Louise, who had directed these operations, turned to follow, when a hand was laid upon her arm. Turning, she saw Richard Shortliff facing her. His countenance was pallor itself, a perceptible tremor shook his voice.

"Miss Crumley, can I render any assistance? If I can be of use to your mother or yourself——"

"You can not be of any use," replied Louise coldly, drawing away.

"But the body of your unhappy father must soon arrive. I thought I would offer my services."

"Your services are not desired, sir. Your position in my father's office gives you no right to intrude in this afflicted house."

There was more than coolness in her tones as she swept by him and up the broad staircase to the rooms above. Nor was her treatment of the man without reason. During the past year Richard Shortliff had lost no opportunity to force his presence upon his employer's daughter.

Upon the occasion of each visit she had made to the office, an occurrence not infrequent, for owing to his dissipated habits Mr. Crumley would sometimes absent himself from his home for days, the bookkeeper had been overwhelming in his attentions, carrying them at times to the bounds of impudence, especially when it chanced that Arthur Lyman was not around. It was this fact that had caused Louise Crumley to conceive a dislike for the vicious, upright Mr. Shortliff, though if asked for reasons it would have been difficult for her to have expressed them in words.

Taking up his hat, Shortliff moved toward the door.

"Be it so," he muttered as he hastily descended the stoop. "You are stuck up, but I will humble your pride. I have always wanted to marry you, and I shall."

Buttoning his overcoat closely about him, Richard Shortliff turned the nearest corner and walked rapidly in the direction of Broadway. Whatever might have been the nature of the bookkeeper's engagement, he had not kept it. Excepting as concerned his Mr. Butters, he might as well have accompanied Timothy Chase to police headquarters at once. After pushing the man who had fastened himself upon him from the platform of the elevated train, Richard Shortliff had leaned breathless and panting against the side of the car.

"Better get inside, young feller," growled the brakeman, thinking him intoxicated, as he came out of the car.

Shortliff obeyed. So pale and weak did he seem that a kind-hearted gentleman immediately relinquished his seat. Into this the bookkeeper sank and buried his face in his hands. Nor did he raise his head until the Bleecker street station was called. Here he arose and hurriedly left the train.

He had now regained his calmness and his facial expression had again changed. Again it was that of a man who had arrived at a stern resolve.

"What's done is done," he muttered as he hurried toward the police headquarters in Mulberry street. "And after all, it will not matter if my other plans succeed."

At police headquarters he was soon joined by Detective Chase. After this followed the arrest. And the face of Richard Shortliff still maintained its determined aspect, as leaving the Crumley mansion, as has been said, he hurried toward Broadway.

"I'll do it," he muttered as he walked. "I'll do it! The stake is too large a one to be lost by faint-hearted fears. I've gone too far to retreat."

The thought had scarce crossed his mind when a quick step was heard behind him and a hand suddenly grasped his throat.

"I've got you!" hissed a well-known voice in his ear. "I've got you, and I mean to kill you if I have to swing!"

It was Jack Butters. His bloated countenance was thrust close to Richard Shortliff's face.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COT No. 63.

THE scene was a room in Bellevue Hospital in which patients picked up insensible in the streets are first received. A young man who now leaned wearily back in the chair upon which he sat, with his arm set in splints, eyes closed and an expression of positive vacancy upon his face, had been picked up in Third avenue close to the Fifty-third street station of the elevated railway. He had fallen upon the slippery ice which covered the sidewalk just as his foot had left the last step of the station stairs, down which he had just come on a run. The young man had instantly become unconscious. A crowd gathered about him. An ambulance was sent for. The young man was taken to Bellevue Hospital at First avenue and Twenty-seventh street and his arm set.

"How long will he probably remain in this condition of aphasia, doctor?" asked an interne.

"It is hard to tell," replied the examining physician. "The loss of memory may be permanent, providing the cerebral matter has exuded through the coronal suture. On the other hand, if the suture is undisturbed, he will probably come to his senses by to-morrow morning, or even during the night."

It was ten o'clock in the evening then. The evening of the twenty-ninth of January, upon which the Crumley murder had occurred.

The examining physician passed his hand over the young man's head several times in quick succession. There was a large bunch beneath the hair and the scalp was cut and bruised from the effect of the fall.

"Oh—oh! you hurt me!" cried the patient, shrinking away.

"It is a good sign," whispered the physician. "If the cerebral matter protruded beneath that bunch there would probably be almost an entire absence of pain. Take him to the charity ward and put him in cot No. 63," he added, addressing a nurse who stood by. "I will drop in and have a look at him before I go to bed."

The directions of the examining physician were followed. The young man was undressed, given a sponge bath and put to bed in cot No. 63. And the hours passed.

"I must see Arthur and learn the truth! I must see Arthur and learn the truth!"

This was the burden of his inarticulate mutterings as the moments crept on.

"This fellow has had a mental as well as a physical shock," said the examining physician as he stooped over cot No. 63, at which he had stopped, in company with one of the internes previous to retiring for the night.

"You see, Mr. Brown, the cerebrum retains the last idea which it held previous to his fall, and was probably in an aggravated condition through great excitement at the time. You will find a most interesting case of this fully described in Tidd's Practice, page 281. I would suggest that you look it up."

"I will, without fail, doctor," said the interne as they moved to the next cot.

Here lay a patient of an entirely different sort. He was a bloated individual of some fifty years or more who had been brought in at a late hour the previous afternoon. His clothes had been a mass of tattered rags. He was simply an exceedingly dirty specimen of the genus tramp, nothing more. The malady from which this person was suffering had been described as convulsions produced by excessive use of alcohol. The man was entirely unable to give any account of himself, being in a state of delirium when the ambulance driver received him. And this is the way that the patient in cot No. 64 came to be next to the handsome young fellow who lay equally delirious in No. 63.

It was something after three o'clock. The groans and moans which had filled the charity ward of Bellevue Hospital had somewhat subsided, many of the wretched sufferers having found relief in sleep. The lights burned low and the nurse on duty sat nodding in his chair, when the patient in cot No. 63 suddenly sat bolt upright. His eyes were open; the expression of natural intelligence had returned to his face.

"Great heavens! what has happened?" he murmured, looking strangely about him. "My head aches as though it would burst. How came I in this place?"

As these questions were not uttered in a voice sufficiently loud to reach the ears of the nurse, no answer was received. The young man stared from bed to bed, his face the picture of bewilderment and despair. On one side of him lay a boy peacefully sleeping; on the other, a coarse, bloated looking man, evidently delirious, who was muttering and mumbling in language by no means choice.

As the eyes of the young man rested upon him the occupant of cot No. 64 suddenly flung his arm from beneath the bed clothes and cried aloud:

"It was the whisky that did it! If old Crumley did drink it, I was a fool to do so, for I'm sure I saw a young fellow put poison in the glass!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INQUEST

IT was on the 29th of January that the well-known produce merchant, John Crumley, was murdered. It was on February 2d that the inquest was held. Coroner O'Callaghan and his jury had first visited the house of the deceased, where the body lay prepared for the grave, and, having viewed the remains, repaired to the warehouse in Coenties Slip, where their deliberations were continued. The first witness examined was Bridget Malone, scrub-woman-in-general to half the offices in the neighborhood. With great volubility and no small display of temper at the cross-questioning of the coroner the testimony of Mrs. Malone had been given. She described the finding of the body of Mr. Crumley. When she let herself into the warehouse by the aid of a key she always carried, to perform her nightly duties, she had discovered the merchant, stretched upon his back, dead on the floor. Simon Struthers, policeman on the beat, gave similar testimony. It was he who had been first summoned by the frightened cries of Mrs. Malone. Following the policeman, Detective Timothy Chase took the stand. His name and occupation having been given, the questioning of the coroner began.

"When you first entered this office, Mr. Chase, in what position did the body lie?"

"Upon its back, sir. At a point about where you now stand."

"Describe the appearance of the face."

"It was badly cut about the temples, evidently by a blow received from a heavy ink-stand which lay beside it on the floor."

"And this ink-stand contained?"

"Red ink of a peculiar shade, sir. Or perhaps I should say had contained, for its contents were scattered about, as you can see by the stains on the floor."

"What was your first impression regarding the cause of death, Mr. Chase?"

"I thought that the deceased had been killed by a blow from the ink-stand, but I soon had reason to change my opinion, for, turning over the body, I discovered a knife wound in the back."

"Mr. Chase, upon arresting Arthur Lyman at the house of his uncle, did you find anything to connect him with the case on or about his person?"

"Well, sir, I found a spot of ink of the same shade as that which had been contained in the stone ink-stand upon the palm of his left hand."

"Anything else?"

"Why, no. Nothing except that he had a paper of oxalic acid in his vest pocket, which he claims to have bought for the purpose of removing the spot."

"Is this it?" asked the coroner, holding up an open package containing a whitish powder.

"Yes, sir."

"That will do, Mr. Chase. Richard Shortliff may take the stand."

The head bookkeeper of the late Mr. Crumley, calm and unruffled, now seated himself in the witness chair. That he had escaped the clutch of Jack Butters was evident. To use a common expression, he looked as if the oleaginous compound from which that gentleman derived his name would not melt in his mouth.

"Mr. Shortliff, you were a bookkeeper for the late Mr. Crumley, I believe?" began the coroner, glancing at his notes.

"Yes, sir."

"What do you know of this affair?"

"Nothing whatever. When I left for home upon that night Mr. Crumley had already gone."

"As you passed through the store did you hear any conversation between Arthur Lyman and a young man named Elmer Romayne?"

"I did, sir."

"What was the nature of that conversation?"

"Arthur Lyman was evidently in a rage, for he uttered threats against his uncle's life."

"What were the words used?"

"As near as I can remember they were: 'I could kill John Crumley.' At all events, the words were to that effect."

"Is that all you know of the affair?"

"Absolutely. The words may have had no meaning.

Arthur was evidently angry. He may not have intended it as a threat."

"These are points for the jury to settle, Mr. Shortliff. You may stand one side."

"Mr. Chase, has anything been heard of Elmer Romayne?" asked the coroner, turning to the detective, who sat near him.

"Not a word, Mr. O'Callaghan. Since he walked out of this office on the night of the murder not the slightest clue to his whereabouts has been gained."

"Arthur Lyman can take the stand," said the coroner, turning toward a young man who stood in charge of a policeman in one corner of the office. He was pale and haggard. His face bore evident traces of his confinement in the Tombs. His bearing was nevertheless firm and resolute as he faced the jury with unflinching eye.

"Arthur Lyman, what do you know of the circumstances attending the death of your uncle?"

"Nothing, sir, so help me God!"

"You had no hand in it?"

"No, sir!"

"Where did you go when you quit work?"

"To the office of a friend of mine—Elmer Romayne."

"Did you see him?"

"No. I had an appointment with him, but he had gone."

"Then where did you go?"

"Straight home, sir. I took the cars of the Sixth avenue elevated road."

"Did you in conversation with Elmer Romayne threaten the life of your uncle?"

The young man colored.

"I used the words stated by Mr. Shortliff," he replied in an agitated tone, "but I did not intend them as a threat."

"Why did you use those words?"

"I was angry and indignant at the treatment I had received at the hands of my uncle."

"In what way had he ill-treated you?"

"He had my father's estate in his hands and was wasting the money in reckless speculation, to my positive knowledge. He refused to make an accounting or pay over what rightfuly belonged to me ever since I came of age."

"Had you any particular cause for being angry with him on the afternoon of the 29th of January?"

"I had."

"State the cause."

"My uncle had just received $50,000 belonging to me from an old lawsuit. I wanted him to pay it over and he refused."

"What form was the money in?"

"It was in fifty-one-thousand-dollar bills. It was paid into his hands just before he left the office."

"What did he do with it?"

"Put it in his pocket and went out, as I told you before."

"And you did not see him again?"

"Not in life."

"I will state here," said Coroner O'Callaghan, turning to the jury, "that no such money was found upon the person of the deceased."

Then turning to the witness, the examination was resumed.

"Mr. Lyman, do you see this ink-stand?" said the coroner, holding up a large stone ink-stand found upon the floor.

"I do."

"Who does it belong to?"

"It belonged in this office. It was used ordinarily by me."

"Was this your desk?" pointing to that in front of which the body of the deceased had fallen.

"It was."

"Did you enter this office at a later hour, encounter your uncle, become engaged in a quarrel with him and fling this ink-stand at his head?"

"No, sir, I did not. When I told you that I did not see my uncle after he left, shortly before noon, I told you the truth."

"You had a spot of ink upon the palm of your hand. How do you account for that?"

"It fell from my pen when I was ruling off my accounts."

"You also had about you a package of oxalic acid. How came you by this?"

"I bought it at a drug store when I went to my lunch."

"What for?"

"To take the ink off my hand."

"But you did not do this?"

"No, sir. The ink was of a peculiar nature. I found that the acid had no effect on it at all."

"Mr. Lyman, was your uncle in the habit of drinking to excess?"

"He was, sir, at times."

"Had he been drinking on the day of his death?"

"Yes, sir; and for several days previous."

"One question more. Since your arrest have you seen or communicated with your friend, Elmer Romayne?"

"No, sir. I have not seen him since he left this store after the interview I have already described."

"You may stand aside, Mr. Lyman."

Leaving the witness chair, Arthur joined the policeman in the corner again.

"Dr. McRae may take the stand," said the coroner.

A grave-looking gentleman stepped to the chair.

"Doctor, you conducted the post-mortem examination held upon the body of John Crumley, did you not?" demanded the coroner, after the preliminary questions.

"I did, sir."

"What did you decide was the cause of death?"

"Poison from oxalic acid. That fact an analysis of the contents of his stomach amply proved."

"What!" cried Timothy Chase, springing from his chair.

Upon the faces of all present save the coroner there was depicted equal surprise. The eyes of Arthur Lyman remained fixed upon Dr. McRae with a rigid stare.

"Silence!" cried Coroner O'Callaghan. "Mr. Chase, you will oblige me by resuming your seat.

"You found a knife wound in the back, did you not, doctor?" continued the coroner, after order had been restored.

"I did."

"Was not that wound in a position to prove fatal?"

"Decidedly, had it not been for one thing. The man when the thrust of that knife was administered was already dead."

"And you state the cause of death to be?"

"Poison by oxalic acid, sir; there can be no doubt that this is a fact."

The retirement of the jury for deliberation followed this testimony. The session was a short one. In less than five minutes they had returned.

"Your verdict is agreed upon, gentlemen?" said Coroner O'Callaghan interrogatively.

And the answer of the jury caused one heart at least among those present to sink with despair.

"We find that John Crumley came to his death through the administration of a dose of oxalic acid, and we recommend that Arthur Lyman be held to await the action of the grand jury, without bail, it being our belief that the hand which administered the poison was his."

CHAPTER NINE

THE BLOTTED PAPER

AS the foreman of the coroner's jury pronounced the verdict none present, not even the coroner himself, could restrain a feeling of regret. Richard Shortliff formed the sole exception. But the face of that individual maintained the expression of calm placidity it had borne all through the inquest; it exhibited neither sorrow nor pity.

Arthur Lyman, though very pale, also preserved a manner calm and dignified. He even shook hands with Timothy Chase as the policeman led him away. Since his arrest the detective had used his influence with the prison authorities to secure for Arthur several privileges which would not otherwise have been granted, and he now took occasion to thank him warmly for his aid.

"Cheer up, my boy," whispered Chase in his ear. "I am not wholly satisfied with the finding of the jury. I shall not desert you. There's sicker horses than this that have got well."

In another moment all had departed save Richard Shortliff and Timothy Chase.

"Mr. Shortliff," said the detective, seeing that the bookkeeper was regarding him inquiringly as though wondering what he was about to do next, "does it not strike you that affairs have taken a most extraordinary turn?"

"Very, I should say. But I suppose you consider your work finished? You drop the case now, of course?"

"On the contrary, I consider my work just begun. With your permission I will remain in the warehouse for a while. I have a desire to make a careful examination of the premises."

"Really, I don't see how I can remain longer, Mr. Chase," replied the bookkeeper with some hesitation. "I have an important engagement. On account of Mr. Crumley's death the store, as you know, is closed."

"It will not be necessary for you to remain."

"But I should prefer to do so. Could you not come tomorrow morning, say, at nine?"

"I prefer to make my examination now. I presume, sir, you have no desire to throw obstacles in the way of my discovering the truth?"

"By no means," answered the bookkeeper with some precipitation. "Though really I can't see what you expect to find. Still, if you insist, I will leave the store in your charge. When you are through you can lock the door and take the keys to Mrs. Malone, the woman who cares for our offices, at No. 9 Front street, top floor."

"Very good. I will see that the door is securely locked."

"And you will find these cigars excellent," remarked the bookkeeper, producing a box of fragrant Havanas. "Make yourself at home, my dear sir. I can assure you that no one desires the discovery of truth in this sad affair more than I do myself."

"I don't like that man," muttered Timothy Chase as, touching a match to one of the cigars, he watched the form of the bookkeeper now passing the office window. "I don't like him, and I can't tell why. Perhaps I'm prejudiced, but his style don't suit me."

Chase now set about a more systematic examination of the premises than he had as yet found opportunity to make. Stepping outside the office into the store, he carefully surveyed the scene. The door leading to the street opened alongside the glass partition which divided the warehouse from the store proper.

The detective saw at a glance that any one entering by this door would be in plain sight of whoever chanced to be within the office at the time. The remainder of the store was piled from floor to roof with pork and beef barrels. Chase worked his way among the barrels to the windows in the rear. These were secured by heavy iron shutters, now tightly closed and fastened, of course, on the inside.

Had they been so closed on that fatal evening? It seemed highly probable.

In fact, so closely were the barrels piled against the windows that it would have been impossible to have opened more than one of them unless they were first removed.

The shutters of this window the detective now threw back. It opened upon a small inclosure filled with all sorts of rubbish, mixed with piles of dirty snow. Beyond, the walls of the adjoining building rose above him. It seemed absolutely out of the question that any one could have entered the store by this means. Besides, there were no marks of footsteps upon the snow which lay spread over the narrow space.

"The slayer of John Crumley never came by that road," muttered Chase as he closed the shutters. "He was either concealed among the barrels or he entered by the outer door."

He now returned to the office and began a survey of the situation of the desks. As he glanced about him his eyes rested upon the large stone ink-stand, which he had at first supposed to have been the weapon employed by the villain in the commission of the deed. This the coroner had left behind, either by accident or design. Timothy picked up the ink-stand and gazed upon it musingly. It was apparently empty, and, more from idle curiosity than by any design, he turned it bottom upward to see if this were actually the case. The stone ink-stand was not quite empty. An exceedingly small portion of its contents still remained.

As Chase held it inverted a single drop of ink fell from it, descending in the direction of the detective's foot, which rested against the leg of Arthur Lyman's desk. The detective drew his foot back suddenly, having no wish to receive the drop of ink upon the toe of his boot. As he did so the drop of ink fell upon a scrap of crumpled paper which lay upon the matting close to the leg of the desk.

Now, in the working up of a case by a skilled detective it oftener happens that small points tell rather than the great. Impelled by the same idle curiosity which caused him to turn the stone ink-stand upside down, Chase stopped, picked up the piece of crumpled paper and smoothed it out upon the desk. It was a note-sheet such as would be used by a lady, and upon one side had evidently been covered with writing. Of this writing, however, three words alone remained visible, one being almost at the beginning of the note, the other two well down toward the end, but so ominous was their meaning that the detective could not refrain from giving utterance to an exclamation of surprise.

"Kill——John Crumley."

These were the words.

The remainder of the note upon which the drop of ink had fallen was hidden beneath a great blot.

CHAPTER TEN

THE MAN-HUNTER GOES TO WORK

DETECTIVE TIMOTHY CHASE regarded the blotted paper with astonishment. That such a thing should be found on the office floor, not three feet from the spot on which the produce merchant met his death, was more than strange.

"Kill——John Crumley!"

"What ominous words! To be sure, one was at the very beginning of the letter and the others well down toward the end. There was no apparent connection between them. Nevertheless, that these three words, of all others in the letter, should have escaped the ink which had been poured upon it was a coincidence more than strange. To an imaginative man this singular paper might have suggested much; but Timothy Chase possessed next to no imagination. He was accustomed to deal with theories, it is true, but those theories, to be acceptable to him, must rest upon a foundation of cold, hard fact. He saw little in the blotted letter beyond an accidental grouping of three words in such a manner as to have peculiar bearing upon the case on which he was working. The letter was therefore put into his great pocketbook more as a curiosity than with any hope that it might prove of future use.

An hour's careful examination of the office and store of Crumley & Co. followed. It revealed nothing further.

When Chase descended the rickety stairs leading down from the apartments of the worthy Mrs. Malone, the scrubwoman, whither he had gone to deposit the key, he was no further advanced in the penetration of the mystery than he had been at the start.

It was a quarter past six.

"I think I will stroll up to the Tombs and have a talk with young Lyman," he muttered. "The first thing is for me to find out more about the private affairs of the Crumley family, to know who and what they are."

Now, there exists a fascination about the streets of New York which seems to take strong hold upon some men. The towering buildings, the hurrying crowds, even the squalor of the byways, become to them objects of never-failing interest, and they study and ponder over them as a mathematician ponders over a favorite problem, finding new interest in every step. It was so with Timothy Chase.

To walk through New York streets, studying the faces of the crowd, had been to him for years an unending source of delight. He never entered a public conveyance unless pressed for time. Having now an abundance of that article on hand, he started to walk to the Tombs. Passing up Broadway, he entered Park Row, with the intention of proceeding directly up Centre street to that gloomy abode of crime, when his attention was attracted by two men who came hastily out of a saloon at the corner of Beekman street and started off in the direction of Chatham street, walking at a rapid pace.

One of these men was Richard Shortliff, the head bookkeeper of Crumley & Co. The other, a man of coarse, bloated appearance, flashily dressed in garments which seemed to have been but yesterday upon the counters of some ready-made clothing store.

"Hello!" thought the detective. "So this is the sort of company Shortliff keeps. Upon my word, his friend with whom he had so pressing an engagement looks more like a bunco-steerer than anything else."

Instinctively he quickened his pace, keeping closely behind the two men. Through the mind of Timothy Chase there flashed a determination to effect a sudden change of plan. He could talk with Arthur Lyman in the Tombs at any time—to-morrow would do as well as to-day. So favorable an opportunity for shadowing the smooth-tongued Mr. Shortliff, for whom he had conceived a violent dislike, might not present itself again.

The two men continued up Chatham street, the detective following. And as he walked a strange transformation took place in the personal appearance of Chase. Taking off his black derby hat, he wiped his forehead with his handkerchief. With the quickness of lightning the derby hat was shut up into incredibly small compass, being constructed with a series of hidden springs. The hat disappeared within a capacious pocket and one of the low, slouch pattern assumed place on his head instead.

When Timothy Chase had first discovered the two men coming out of the saloon his eyes had seemed in perfect condition. Now they were shielded by a pair of large black spectacles which gave a totally different appearance to his face. Again the detective thrust his hand into his pocket—walking quietly behind Shortliff and his friend all the time—withdrawing it, pressed the hand to his mouth and passing it gently back and forth as a man might do when stroking his mustache.

Stroking his mustache! Why, a moment ago Detective Chase had no mustache!

Surely this must be a mistake, for he had one now; fiery red, and completely covering his mouth.

Were Richard Shortliff to turn and face him now he would be ready to swear that the man who walked quietly behind him was a person whom he had never seen before. He did so turn on several occasions. On the first of these he saw the man with the red mustache and black glasses behind him, his presence exciting no suspicion. When he next looked the man was gone. Had his eyes turned across the street, however, he might have seen him following in the distance, apparently paying no attention to him at all. Up Chatham street, across the Square. Up East Broadway to Grand street, across Grand street and into Ridge. This was the course pursued by the bookkeeper and his companion. Upon the opposite side of the street the disguised detective pursued the same course, too.

The two men, keeping on Ridge street until the middle of the block between Broome and Delancey was reached, entered an old-fashioned two-story brick house.

Before the door stood a waiting limousine, at which Timothy Chase saw Shortliff throw a satisfied glance.

"Now, what brings that man to this part of the town?" he inwardly muttered. "For so pious and upright an individual as he pretends to be he chooses strange company and visits singular places, I must say."

Stationing himself upon the corner of Broome street, the detective for the next half hour watched the red brick house.

At the expiration of that time his patience was rewarded by seeing no less a person than the fashionable Madame Crumley of Fifth avenue come out of the house, enter the car, which was at once driven rapidly away.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

JAKE KLEY

FROM ballroom to a prison cell. The transformation is startling, not to say tremendous. Just this transformation had Arthur Lyman been called upon to undergo.

It happened that two days after the inquest the grand jury began its sessions and Lyman was upon the first day indicted for the murder of his uncle. During all the days which had followed his arrest Arthur had received but one visitor. This was Detective Timothy Chase. He came on the day following the inquest and questioned the young man closely concerning his own past and the affairs of his uncle's family. His manner had been exceedingly kind and friendly and Arthur told the simple story of his life without the slightest reserve. His mother had been Mr. Crumley's sister. Marrying a man of wealth at an early age, she had inherited a large estate at the death of her husband, Arthur being their only child. Mrs.

Lyman had survived her husband one year only. At her death the property had passed entirely into the hands of Mr. Crumley, to be held in trust for her son in accordance with her husband's will. Further than this—save that he had since been a member of his uncle's household—Arthur had nothing to tell.

From Mr. Crumley he had never received an accounting for so much as a single penny of his great estate.

"Keep up your courage, my boy," Chase had said. "I, for one, believe you to be innocent and I shall not rest until I have made the world see the matter in its true light."

A week had now elapsed since the detective's visit, during which time the unfortunate prisoner had neither seen nor heard from his friends outside the walls of the Tombs.

Where was his aunt? Where was his bosom friend Romayne, for whom he would have willingly laid down his life? And, above all others, where was Louise Crumley, who, at the moment when the eyes of the world had been turned upon his disgrace, had boldly announced herself as his affianced wife?

From neither one nor the other had there come so much as a message of inquiry as to his condition. It was this fact that cut the young man most deeply, and as the days crept on added to his feeling of utter despair. On the afternoon of February 5th, just one week after the visit Arthur Lyman had received from Timothy Chase, the door of his cell was opened and a keeper appeared.

"Here's a man to see you, Mr. Lyman," he said in the usual short tone employed by the keepers to the prisoners. Then, ushering in a dilapidated, seedy-looking fellow, the keeper closed and locked the door of the cell.

Arthur gazed upon his visitor in surprise. In the first place, he had never to his knowledge set eyes upon the man before. In the second place, the fellow was so exceedingly shabby in his dress and general appearance as to convey the idea that he was little better than a tramp. He was a young man of about the prisoner's own age and bearing not a little resemblance to him in face and form.

"Say, my name's Jake Kley," he said in a deep whisper. "I s'pose you don't know me, but I know you."

He thrust out a dirty hand as he spoke, on the little finger of which glittered a fake diamond quite as showy as the one in his pin, and regarded Arthur with a knowing smile.

"Indeed, I don't know you," said the prisoner, drawing back with some dignity, at the same time rejecting the proffered hand. "And, what is more, I can't imagine why you are here."

"I s'pose not. Can't shake hands with a feller what's come to do you the tallest kind of a favor? Well, that's just like you guys. You'd be mighty glad to shake hands with me if you knew what I came for. You can bet your life on that."

"Who are you and what do you want with me?"

"I told you that I was Jake Kley; they used to call me the Sixth Ward dude once, but just now I'm short of funds and a little seedy, don't yer see? This here letter will explain what I want with you. You'd better read it."

Then Mr. Kley handed Arthur a yellow envelope and coolly seated himself on the bed.

The envelope contained a note which read as follows:

"MR. LYMAN—You are innocent of your uncle's death, but while you remain locked up in the Tombs it can never be proved. That you may have a chance to prove your innocence I have arranged your escape. Do as the bearer tells you and in half an hour you will be a free man beyond all danger. Follow the woman with the red shawl when you get out of the Tombs.

"One Who Will Be Always Your Friend."

The note, badly written and worse spelled, fell from Arthur Lyman's hand as he stood staring at his visitor in undisguised amazement.

"Look a-here, 'twon't do to have that thing a-layin' around," said Kley, stooping and picking up the note, to which he set fire with the lighted end of a cigar, flinging it off in one corner of the cell.

"Did you write that?" demanded Arthur, not knowing what to say.

"I? No, not much! It was writ by the feller what hired me. He's well heeled, you bet. Got the rocks—dead loads on 'em. But come, young feller, there's no time to lose. Do you want to take advantage of this chance or not? I'm here for biz."

Should he listen to this fellow or should he call the keeper and have him thrust out of the cell? Was this a new device of the unseen enemies who for the past two weeks had seemed to surround him, to lead him into a worse fix than he was? With his mind filled with conflicting emotions Arthur turned to his visitor again.

"Who wrote that note?"

"I promised not to tell. He's your friend. You will see him after you get out."

"Suppose I refuse to go?"

"Then you are a fool and I am a couple of thousand out of pocket—that's all."

"You are to be paid for helping me to escape?"

"Why, cert'nly. Do you suppose this is a love racket? Not much!"

"How do you propose to manage it?"

"Don't speak so loud. You see we look like twin brothers, don't yer?"

"No, I had not observed it."

"Come now, no airs. I was as good as you before I got down. Your size and shape is just the same as mine, and our faces don't look so very unlike."

"Well, perhaps you are right—what then?"

"Then all you've got to do is to drop them swell clothes of your'n and get into my last summer's suit."

"What! And attempt to pass the keeper? He'd detect me at a glance.

Jacob Kley gave vent to a short laugh.

"No, he won't," he answered, his voice sinking to a whisper. "He's been told to keep his eyes the other way."

"Come, come, young feller, you've only five minutes more," said the gruff voice of the keeper outside the grated door. The voice, though gruff, was as full of meaning as were the man's words. There was that about the keeper's manner of speaking that Arthur had never observed before.

"What will you do?" he whispered in great excitement, turning again to Jake Kley.

"Never you mind me. You heard what he said. There's only a few minutes left."

"But suppose I'm stopped at the gate?"

"You won't be stopped at the gate if you are half sharp. Will you do it? I want them two thousand dollars. I won't get a blame cent if you refuse."

"I—I don't know. I hardly dare——"

"There's no risk. But you've let another minute slide. Will yer do it?"

"You are sure no harm will come to you?"

"I'll take the chances. I expect to be sent up for a year on the island, but that's nothin' new to me. I'll have my two thousand, and after a little Lawyer O'Fogarty 'll get

me off. Come, we can't stay chinnin' no longer. Three minutes of the five 's gone now. Will you do it or will you not?"

"I will do it," answered Arthur in a whisper.

"Then," said Jake Kley in the same low tone, "don't wait to say another word, but off with your breeches, young feller, and on with mine."

CHAPTER TWELVE

ELMER ROMAYNE SURPRISED

ON the morning of the visit of Jake Kley to Arthur Lyman, Elmer Romayne turned into Coenties Slip from Pearl street, coming from the direction of Broad. Losing his job, Romayne had found himself suddenly thrown upon the streets of New York utterly penniless, with a weak head and a broken right arm. Yet he who during his week in Bellevue had occupied cot No. 63 in the charity ward had been more fortunate than the occupant of the cot next beyond. This had been a tramp who had died on the night of Elmer's admission and had been buried in the Potter's field.

The thought of Elmer was to learn what had been the fate of Arthur Lyman. In the charity ward of Bellevue Hospital he had been able to learn nothing. The Crumley murder case was the reigning sensation of the day and was then forgotten; the nurses paid no attention to his inquiries. They knew nothing of the affair and would not take the trouble to find out. It was for this reason that Elmer, proceeding to the store of Crumley & Co., with the intention of questioning Richard Shortliff, was wholly in the dark concerning the events of the previous week. He found the store closed. A bill announcing that it was to let was pasted inside the office window upon the glass. Elmer stepped into the adjoining store.

"Can you tell me what has become of Crumley & Co.?" he asked of a clerk.

"Crumley was murdered; didn't you hear?" answered the clerk. "Widow intends to give up the business, I believe."

"And Arthur Lyman, Mr. Crumley's nephew?" said Elmer faintly, scarce daring to put the question.

"Oh, he's in the Tombs. They say he killed Crumley. I don't know."

"I must see him," muttered Elmer as he hastily left the store. "Shortliff heard his threat made to me and has used it against him. He is capable of it, for he has hated Arthur for years. I who know his true heart know that he is as innocent as I am myself of even the thought of a crime so terrible. I must see him before I make another move."

But Elmer knew well enough that it is no easy matter to gain admission to a prisoner in the Tombs charged with a capital crime. He accordingly hurried to a young lawyer with whom he possessed a speaking acquaintance and through his influence obtained a pass. This consumed several hours. It was after five o'clock when Elmer presented himself at the Franklin street entrance to the Tombs—an hour and more subsequent to the visit of Jake Kley. Elmer pulled the bell boldly.

"I want to see Arthur Lyman," he said, presenting his pass to the keeper who appeared behind the iron gate.

The gate-keeper examined the pass attentively. The fact was it was after hours, but across the back of the pass were written a few lines by a prominent alderman requesting that the bearer be admitted to the presence of the prisoner at whatever time he might choose to call.

"Bill," said the man, calling out to a keeper, "show this gentleman to No. 82."

A moment later and Elmer Romayne was traversing the galleries surrounding the Tombs yard. The keeper on guard before the tier of cells in which No. 82 was located at the time of the visit of Jake Kley had been relieved and another occupied his place.

"Eighty-two!" exclaimed Elmer's conductor, as this man came in sight. "Make as short work of it as possible, young fellow, for it's after hours now."

The keeper led the way to cell No. 82.

"In there!" he said gruffly as he unlocked a grated door, ushering the visitor into a dark and narrow cell.

"No, no! You've made a mistake!" cried Elmer, drawing back.

The occupant of the cell No. 82, who lay stretched at full length upon the cot, was not his friend. That he could see at a glance. Instead, his eyes rested upon a coarse, hardened fellow of similar build, dressed in Arthur Lyman's clothes. At the sound of the words spoken by Elmer Romayne the keeper sprang into the cell.

"Where's Arthur Lyman?" he shouted, seizing the man upon the bed and shaking him violently. "Where is he, I say, and who the mischief are you?"

The man raised himself to a sitting posture.

"Blest if I can tell you, boss," he answered coolly. "Arthur Lyman stepped out to make a call about half an hour ago and left me to keep house in his place."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN ILL-TIMED PROPOSAL

NO sooner had the coroner and his jury retired than Madame Crumley sought her daughter's room. Louise, seated sadly by the window, did not greet the entrance of her mother with even so much as a smile.

To the few persons familiar with the inside workings of the Crumley mansion this fact would have occasioned no surprise. There was little or no affection between Madame Crumley and her daughter. Of course this was sad, but it was nevertheless a fact.

Had Louise Crumley been questioned as to its cause, she would have been unable to give any tangible reason. It was simply that the stout, bustling presence of Madame Crumley was repugnant to her. Moreover, Madame Crumley had exhibited little or no motherly affection for her daughter, from her earliest recollections, until now.

"Louise!"

"Well, mother?"

Without rising, the girl, whose eyes were red with weeping, turned her face in the direction of the chair into which Madame Crumley had sunk wearily.

"The coroner has gone."

"Yes; I heard him go."

"They will finish the inquest at the store, and they will find Arthur guilty. Of that there cannot be the slightest doubt."

On the part of the daughter tears were the sole reply.

"What ails you? What are you whimpering about?" demanded the elder woman, with a coarseness of manner which would have surprised her society friends. "You don't mean to tell me, Louise, that you still love Arthur after what he has done?"

"But I do, mother!" exclaimed Louise, with emphasis. "I love him more than any one else in the world."

"Then you will have to get over your liking. Your taking his part the other night when he was arrested was

scandalous, and I can't allow the matter to proceed any further. I believe Arthur to be guilty of your father's murder; but even were I assured of his innocence, you should never marry him with my consent. We have nothing to live on, Louise. Your father managed to dispose of everything of any value except the business downtown, and as I know nothing about that, it is entirely necessary that you should marry Richard Shortliff, as I have already told you. Otherwise we may wake up one of these fine days and find ourselves with nothing to eat."

As Madame Crumley uttered this remarkable speech, she eyed her daughter fixedly. Not the slightest change of expression nor the smallest movement upon the part of the young girl escaped her observation. Could it be possible that at such a time and under such circumstances Madame Crumley sought to force her daughter into a marriage with a man upon whom she could look only with feelings of loathing and disgust?

Strange as such a proceeding may seem, such was indeed the case. Not only once but repeatedly since Mr. Crumley's death had the proposition been made. For the unseemly haste displayed by Madame Crumley there was an excellent reason.

Louise Crumley, beautiful in her grief, rose slowly and, trembling with agitation, approached her mother's chair.

"I shall never marry Richard Shortliff," she said in firm, decided tones. "Mother, I sometimes think you must be mad! My father not yet in his grave, and you to press me in this unseemly manner. For shame! for shame! I shall be true to Arthur, understand that once and for all. If you persist in attempting to force me into this odious union with one whom I hate and despise, I shall leave this house and never return."

It was somewhat surprising, but to this speech Madame Crumley did not for a moment utter a word. Rising to her feet at last, she waddled—we cannot call it walked—toward her daughter, and kissed her with great display of motherly affection.

"There, there, child!" she said, soothingly. "I shall say no more about the matter for the present. To-morrow we have the funeral on our hands. It will be time enough to talk further about it when that is over. By and by you may accompany me for a drive. We both need a change of scene, and a short ride, even in a closed carriage, will do us good. Whatever happens, there are only you and I left, and we must be friends."

Then Madame Crumley left the room. Friends! The relation of mother and daughter should be a far closer one than that. All her life long Louise Crumley, actuated only by the purest of motives, had tried to feel a daughter's affection for her mother; yet, try as she would, she had somehow signally failed. Though fully aware of the lack of affection which had long existed between her parents, and still more fully aware of the utter want of motherly feeling on the part of Madame Crumley toward herself, this strange proposition of marriage with a man whom she scarcely knew had taken the girl entirely by surprise. Evidently it was no sudden conception on the part of Madame Crumley.

"She must marry Dick, and she shall," muttered that lady as she found herself alone in her room. "Another month will bring matters to a crisis, and then——"

Then Madame Crumley ceased to mutter. The remainder of her thoughts on the subject she kept to herself. By the envious neighbors on the side of the avenue opposite the Crumley mansion it was observed late in the afternoon that madame and her daughter went out in a closed carriage for a drive. Still later—and it was well on toward evening—it was also observed that madame returned in the same carriage alone.

On the following day the funeral took place. Louise Crumley did not appear at the funeral. Nor during the week which followed was the form of the beautiful girl again seen by the neighbors or by any of madame's society friends who called to condole with her upon her recent bereavement.

"The poor child was so completely broken with grief that I was obliged to send her away for a change of scene," the widow of the late John Crumley invariably replied when inquiry concerning her daughter was made. But the days passed and Louise did not return.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE RED SHAWL

THE iron gate of the Franklin street entrance to the Tombs had closed upon a young man who walked slowly toward Center street, his eyes moving uneasily to the right and the left. In outward appearance this young man strongly resembled the enterprising but somewhat slangy Jake Kley, who had called to visit Arthur Lyman not half an hour before. There were the same shabby-genteel clothes, the same flashy necktie, battered hat and well-worn shoes.

To make the resemblance even more complete, the young man carried between the fingers of his left hand the stump of a half-smoked cigar. The resemblance to Mr. Kley was strong. Strong enough, in point of fact, to have completely deceived the argus-eyed guardian at the door of the Tombs.

It had been years since a similar thing had happened—no escape had ever taken place during all that time. The young man behind whom the Tombs' door had just clanged was Arthur Lyman. It was Jake Kley who remained behind in the cell, calmly awaiting results. Yes, Arthur Lyman was free at last. But in that moment of freedom he almost regretted the step he had taken. Who would now believe him innocent of the crime of which he stood charged? At the corner of Franklin and Center streets he paused, and leaned for a moment against the newsdealer's booth, which at that point stood against the iron railing which surrounds the old Tombs.

"I've half a mind to go back," he muttered. "This sort of thing don't suit me. I am innocent, and yet I have deliberately placed myself in the position of a hunted criminal. I don't——"

"Good-evening."

Arthur stood his ground. Surveying the woman who spoke, he bade her good-evening in return. She was young and common-looking, and evidently used to work. There was nothing striking about her appearance in any way—except the red shawl. That struck Arthur most forcibly.

"Follow the woman in the red shawl," the letter had said. The red shawl was at his side.

"Did you get scared?" asked the woman, drawing nearer.

"What do you want?"

Arthur was in no mood for conversation. Every moment increased his danger, and he answered with the determination to bring the woman to the point at once.

"Are you Jake Kley's man?"

"Suppose I am—what then?"

"Then you are to follow me."

"Where to?"

"What does that matter? Ain't any place better than the one you've just left?"

"That depends. There is such a thing as getting out of the frying-pan into the fire. I might go back and give myself up."

"But you won't. Unless you are a fool you will talk less and follow me at once."

Should he follow her? An escaped prisoner without a cent in his pocket, what else was there left to do? True, there was his aunt, Madame Crumley—he might appeal to her for assistance—and now that he was out of the Tombs, manage affairs on his own account. But Arthur had no thought of appealing to the generosity of Madame Crumley. He knew the disposition of his relative by marriage far too well for that.

"Lead on, I'll follow," he said, after a moment of hesitation.

The woman left his side abruptly, and mingled with the right-hand throng. Occasionally she turned her head to see if Arthur was following. In each instance she saw him a few feet behind her, for come what would, he had fully determined not to lose sight of the red shawl. At Canal street the woman turned eastward. Arthur did the same. Here the crowd grew denser. Pedestrians sufficient to populate a fair-sized Western town crowded the sidewalks, all bound for home.

"And I have no home," thought the youth, brushing his hand across his eyes. It was that sudden softening of feeling that comes upon the best of us at times. As he thought of his wretched position it came to the mind of Arthur Lyman with crushing force. And it strengthened him. Louise still lived and, come what might, upon her undying affection he felt that he could depend. Arthur straightened himself up, filled with stern resolve.

"I am free now," he murmured inaudibly. "Free to think and act. As God hears me, I swear that I will know no rest, night or day, until the mystery surrounding my uncle's death is solved."

And he followed the red shawl. Down Canal street to the Bowery, up the Bowery to Grand. There the woman, turning again and still proceeding eastward, continued along New York's busiest thoroughfare until Attorney street was reached. Here the red shawl turned again, and keeping along the right-hand side of Attorney street for the distance of a block and a half, entered the door of a new-looking tenement and led the way up the stairs to the first door above the street.

"Knock at the front door," she whispered.

Then turning, she ran hastily down the stairs and disappeared. And Arthur knocked. Instantly the door was thrown open. Before him stood the hunchback of Coenties Slip. It was Johnny Taws!

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

TIMOTHY CHASE STRIKES A CLUE

AS Elmer Romayne drew back from the recumbent form of Jake Kley, stretched upon Arthur Lyman's cot, he became suddenly aware that another person beside the turnkey had entered the cell. Turning abruptly, he beheld, standing close by the door, no less a person than Detective Timothy Chase.

The week which had passed had thrown no light upon the Crumley case, and even the patient Chase was beginning to despair. He had exhausted every means at hand to find a starting-point, a clue, but each effort brought with it new disappointment, and the result of all his investigation may be summed up in the words—nothing at all.

Upon this afternoon Detective Chase had resolved upon another interview with the prisoner. Well acquainted with all the Tombs authorities, he had experienced no difficulty in obtaining admission to the building, chance bringing him to the cell not two minutes after Elmer Romayne. Thus he had overheard the astonished exclamations of the turnkey and the flippant answers of Jake Kley.

Now Elmer only knew the detective as a man who had summoned him into the private office of Crumley & Co. upon the occasion of the discovery of the dead merchant. He did not know his name. Timothy Chase, on the contrary, had a faculty of remembering both names and faces, consequently he recognized Elmer at once. Before he had an opportunity to speak, however, the turnkey had pushed them both out of the cell, and locking the door amid various agitated and by no means sacred exclamations, had hastened to the office to give notice of the prisoner's escape. As for Jake Kley, he manifested no further interest in the affair, but calmly turned over upon his side as he lay on the cot, and pretended to fall asleep. As the turnkey disappeared along the galley, Timothy Chase laid his hand upon Elmer's arm.

"Well, Mr. Romayne, your friend seems to have taken himself off," he said, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice.

"You cannot be any more astonished than I am," answered Elmer. "I am obliged to confess that I am at a loss to understand what all this means."

"It means that Arthur Lyman has friends outside the prison, that that fellow in the cell there has changed clothes with him, and that he has escaped."

"I can scarcely believe it."

"Yet you see it is so. If your friend is innocent he could not have taken a more foolish step."

"He is innocent—I can swear to it. Arthur Lyman is wholly incapable of any such crime."

"So you said before. Mr. Romayne, we have searched for you everywhere during the past week. Do you know I consider myself very fortunate to have run across you as I have?"

"Who has searched for me?"

"The detectives and the police. I have done my share."

"Indeed!" replied Elmer, with some degree of bitterness. "I thought every one had forgotten me. I have not been so far away. But, excuse me, sir, I only know you as a detective. Might I inquire your name?"

"My name is Timothy Chase. Have you been sick? You look thin and pale. What is the matter with your arm? I see you carry it in a sling."

"I have been sick, Mr. Chase. I met with a severe fall, and had the misfortune to break my arm."

"Indeed! How did it occur?"

"I fell on the ice as I was descending the steps of the Fifty-third street station of the Third avenue elevated road."

"And where have you been all this time?"

"In Bellevue Hospital."

"What an idiot I am!" muttered the detective, striking his hand upon the rail of the gallery. "I ought to have searched the hospitals the first thing. Instead of that, they never once entered my thoughts."

"You might have found me if you had done so. I was discharged only this afternoon."

"And now that I have found you, I want to have a little talk with you. Come, let us get outside. There'll be a

tremendous row here presently, and I feel no desire to be mixed up with this business at all."

Indeed, from appearances, the "row" had already begun, for along the gallery footsteps were now heard approaching, and the frightened turnkey appeared, the warden of the Tombs following.

Personally acquainted with the warden, Timothy Chase had no difficulty in satisfying him that Elmer Romayne was in no way connected with the escape. Indeed, this was plain, for from the moment the young man had entered the prison until the cell-door had been opened he had been accompanied by one of the officers of the jail.

Five minutes later, Elmer, very much perplexed, found himself in company with Timothy Chase outside the gloomy walls of the Tombs. They discussed the Crumley affair in all its bearings. Elmer had told of his interview with Arthur Lyman upon the afternoon of the murder, and had reiterated his entire belief in his innocence.

"His remark was only the anger of a boy, Mr. Chase," he said earnestly. "I can assure you that he meant nothing by it at all."

"I believe you," answered the detective. "I have never entertained any other opinion. It is most unfortunate that you were not present at the inquest, your statement would have gone a long way toward influencing the minds of the jury. And now comes this remarkable escape, which will only serve to strengthen the public belief in Arthur Lyman's guilt."

"He cannot be guilty. Arthur is no coward. He couldn't have stabbed his uncle in the back."

Timothy Chase laughed slightly.

"You are behind the age, young man," he said. "Don't you know that the coroner's jury decided that John Crumley was poisoned—not stabbed?"

"Poisoned! How?"

"With oxalic acid. How, is just what I am trying to find out."

Elmer dropped his knife and fork, and fell back in his chair.

"Poisoned with oxalic acid!" he murmured faintly; "could the words of the tramp then have had some meaning after all?"

"Tramp! what tramp? Young man, what do you mean?"

"I—I was thinking of something that happened in Bellevue Hospital. I—I hardly know what I mean myself."

"Speak!" cried the detective, leaning across the table in great excitement. "Tell me plainly what is in your mind."

"I was thinking of a man who occupied the next cot to mine in the hospital. He was a tramp who had been brought in suffering with some kind of spasms. He died in the night, and just before his death I overheard him make use of some singular words."

"And those words were?"

"I was a fool to drink from that glass, even if old Crumley did, for I saw the other feller put poison in it."

"Great God! You don't say so? Do you know where the fellow came from?"

"They told me he was picked up in a saloon on the corner of Pearl and Broad."

Timothy Chase struck his fist upon the table with a force that made the dishes rattle.

"At last!" he exclaimed, in tones of intense satisfaction. "After a week of fruitless search, at last I have struck the right clue!"

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE BROKEN GLASS

IT was on the 29th of January that Detective Timothy Chase first entered the saloon on the corner of Pearl street and Broad. On the morning following his interview with Elmer Romayne he entered it again. He was not alone. Elmer, looking brighter, but still pale and weak, was by his side. This was in accordance with the detective's express request. Bent upon solving the mystery surrounding the death of John Crumley and obtaining the reward, he had resolved to keep the friend of Arthur Lyman close under his eye.

Learning the young man's destitute condition, he had himself provided for him a room at a cheap hotel, at the same time giving him money for his immediate wants.

"We will work together," he had said to Elmer, "and in spite of the folly of your friend, we will yet prove him an innocent man before the world."

One of the first duties of Timothy Chase on that morning had been to go to Bellevue Hospital. There he learned, greatly to his satisfaction, that the statements made by Elmer, both as concerned himself and the death of the tramp, were true. From the hospital he had hurried to the hotel, and in company with Elmer, had repaired at once to the Broad street saloon. Fortunately for the detective, the place was deserted, the Holland bartender being alone in charge.

"My friend, do you recollect me?" asked Timothy Chase approaching the bar.

"Yas. Vot is it you vant?"

"I am a detective. I want to see you? Do you remember that tramp that was taken sick by your stove?"

"You bet! I preaks his plame neck if he gomes in here again."

"You'll hardly have a chance to do that, my friend. The man is dead."

"Dead!"

"Yes; he died in the hospital. It is believed that he was poisoned in your place."

"Poison! Ve sell no poison. Vot de deuce do you mean?"

"You'll find out if you don't answer my questions," said the detective sternly.

That the Hollander was thoroughly frightened was evident. In accomplishing this, Timothy Chase had gained his end.

"What became of that glass out of which he drank?" he continued, leaning forward upon the bar.

"Led me tink. Yes, dot glass I knock off der par ven I goes to put him owit. I trows it in a pox in de caller. I gets him in a minute, Mr. Detective."

The Eyes of Timothy Chase sparkled. Here was a point gained for which he had no reason to hope. In another moment he stood before the bar with the fragments of the broken tumbler in his hand.

"You are sure it is the same?" he demanded.

"I am certain," answered the bartender. "I haf not proke anoder glass in two veeks."

Wrapping the fragments of the broken tumbler into a piece of paper, and thrusting them in his pocket, Timothy Chase turned to the man again.

"Do you remember how that glass and the bottle came to be on the bar when I entered?" he asked quietly. "I recollect seeing them there at the time."

"Led me see," answered the bartender musingly. "Yes, I remember vell enough. Ven I vent outside to speak mit dot girl I left Mr. Crumleys in here. He had been taking a drink."

"Mr. Crumley?"

"Yes. Und Mr. Shordliffs' his bookkeeper. Mr. Crumleys vas full already, und he gif Mr. Shordliffs a pig roll of pills. I see him mineself."

"And then what?"

"Then he wanted another drink. Ve don't measure to customers like Mr. Crumleys. I seen the girl outside, und I vant to schpeak mit her. I schust put de pottle und glass on de par und left dem to help demselves."

"And when you come back?"

"Dey vos gone, und dot plamed tramp vot I fire owit vos pack und schtanding by de stove. You know dot already. You vos here yourself."

"Enough said, my friend. Let me advise you to speak of this to no one, unless you want to get into trouble. Understand?"

The detective and Elmer then left the saloon and walked toward Wall Street.

Having gained that street, the detective passed on to Broadway and entered a building between Cedar street and Pine.

"We'll step in here for a moment," he said. "There is a man upstairs whom I want to see."

They entered the elevator and were lifted to the top floor.

"Did Mr. Shortliff, at the inquest, say anything about the money he received from Crumley in the saloon?" whispered Elmer, as they found themselves in the upper hall. His mind had been busy during the ascent of the elevator, and the recollection of what Arthur had told him concerning the $50,000 received by his uncle on the morning of the murder now recurred to him with redoubled force. Timothy Chase turned and looked at him with a peculiar smile.

"No," he answered quietly. "Mr. Shortliff forgot to mention it. He distinctly stated that he had seen nothing of John Crumley since he left the office at noon."

"But if the bartender tells the truth he must have seen him?"

"Hush. I'm going here. We'll discuss that later on."

As he spoke Timothy Chase opened the door of an office, upon which the sign, "F. Kesselmeyer, Analytical Chemist," was displayed, painted in black letters upon a white ground.

"Good-morning, professor," said the detective, addressing an intelligent-looking man, who appeared from an inner room.

"Ah! good-morning, my friend Chase; what can I do to serve you?"

Evidently Timothy Chase and Professor Kesselmeyer had met before.

"A little job in the line of my profession," answered the detective, drawing the paper containing the broken glass from his pocket. "Can you give me any idea what sort of stuff that tumbler last contained?"

"Certainly. Providing it has not been washed."

"I don't think it has. It smells strongly of whisky, you see."

"So it does," replied the chemist, placing the bottom of the broken tumbler beneath his nose. "Wait one minute, gentlemen. Possibly I can help you. I will step into my laboratory and make a few tests."

With the fragments of the tumbler in his hand, the professor vanished into the room beyond.

"Do you suppose he can tell?" whispered Elmer, whose excitement was becoming intense.

"There is no use in discussing probabilities," answered Chase in a quiet tone. "Just now we actually know nothing; in a few moments we shall have whatever secrets the broken glass may have hidden made perfectly plain. How is your arm?"

"Better—a great deal better."

"I'm glad of that. Now, where do you suppose your friend Arthur Lyman is this morning?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Chase; I wish I did."

"Then you don't think he acted wisely in making his escape from the Tombs?"

"I do not. If he were guilty of the crime for which he was imprisoned, I would feel differently; as he is innocent, I think he has made a grave mistake. Did you not hear them calling extras last night, announcing his escape? All the world believes him to be guilty now."

"You are quite right," answered the detective, with another peculiar smile. "I tell you, young man, Arthur Lyman ought to feel proud of having a friend so true to him as you are. My friends have all proved just the other way—false to a man."

"I only wish I could see him," murmured Elmer, "if it were only for a moment, to explain my apparent desertion."

The detective laughed oddly.

"Would you really like to see him?" he said. "Then perhaps you may have—— But here comes the professor. Now we shall see what we shall see."

At this moment Professor Kesselmeyer entered with the fragments of the broken glass in his hand.

"Well," demanded Timothy Chase, "and what have you learned?"

The professor laid the glass upon a table and handed the detective a written formula.

"I have only made a few hurried tests," he said. "This broken glass last contained a large quantity of oxalic acid mixed with whisky. It must have been a deadly dose for the man who drank it. You'll find the proportions written down."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A GENTLEMAN OF MEANS

JOHNNY TAWS dragged Arthur, who made no attempt at resistance, within the room, then closed and locked the door.

"Johnny, what does this mean? You—you know where I come from?"

Arthur gazed about in amazement as he stammered forth these words. And no wonder. The apartment in which he found himself, which formed one of a suite, arranged after the usual tenement-house fashion, was furnished, as the saying goes, "up to the nines."

Gorgeous carpets, lace curtains, sofas and chairs.

The appearance of the hunchback himself was equally startling. Instead of his usually shabby, ill-fitting garments, his slim legs were now incased in a pair of tight-fitting trousers of a "loud" pattern, made still more noticeable by a brand-new coat and vest of still "louder" pattern, and anything but a match. Add to which a watch-chain of enormous links and a flaming red scarf, into which an alleged diamond-pin was thrust, and you have Johnny Taws as he appeared before Arthur Lyman upon that memorable night. At the question of his visitor, Johnny Taws gave vent to a short, quick laugh.

"Know where you come from! I guess yes!" he exclaimed, laughing aloud. "You got my letter and here you are."

"Then you are the person who sent that man Kley to the Tombs?"

"I guess yes. Johnny Taws never goes back on a friend, Mr. Lyman. You was good to me—best of any one in the Slip. I swore I'd help you out of your scrape, and I done it, and here you are."

The hunchback led the way to the rear room, or kitchen, where a comfortable meal was spread. There were plenty of beefsteak and fried potatoes, an enormous pumpkin-pie, etc.

"The man down in the saloon sends me up my meals," he explained. "This came up while you were coming. Now help yourself, for there ain't no ceremony about me."

And Arthur, who was as hungry as a wolf, fell to and began to eat with a will. To his mind the whole affair was a complete mystery. He had known Johnny Taws not over a week before as little better than a beggar, gaining a precarious living by gathering up waste-paper and doing odd jobs around the offices in Coenties Slip. How he came to be established in a place like this, with surroundings which, though cheap and vulgar, must have cost a considerable sum, was more than Arthur could comprehend. But he made no haste to inquire into the matter.

After the excitement of the past hour had come the relaxation. He had escaped from the Tombs—he was safe. Further than that he did not care to even think.

"Kinder surprised, ain't yer?" said his diminutive host, whose head seemed scarce to reach to the level of the table, as he bolted a huge piece of steak.

"I am surprised, Johnny. I confess I can't understand what it all means."

"I knowed you'd be. I was afraid to sign my name to the letter, for fear yer wouldn't come."

"Then it was you who arranged my escape?"

"You bet. Money did the whole bizness. You needn't have no fears about that there Jake Kley. He's got too many friends in this ward to have any harm come to him. The whole thing was fixed for me by one who knows how to fix it right."

"I'm sure I'm greatly indebted to you, Johnny," replied Arthur, scarcely knowing what to say.

"No, you ain't. You was always good to me, you was. I swore I'd help you, an' I done it. Look a-here, Mr. Lyman, you never killed your uncle, an' I know it. You are too good to do a thing like that. 'While he's locked up he can't do nothin',' I says to myself, an' I made up my mind I'd get you out, if it cost me half my pile."

"Half your pile? What do you mean?"

"Oh, ye don't know. How should yer? When yer saw me last I was poor, but now I'm rich."

"Rich?"

"You bet. I was worth fifty thousand dollars before I began to spend. These rooms cost a pile to fit up, an' before I get through I'll have spent a good five thousand in gettin' you out of the Tombs."

Arthur stared at the hunchback in silent amazement.

Johnny, with a knowing wink, close down at the edge of the table, seemed to enjoy his surprise hugely.

"You worth fifty thousand dollars, Johnny! How in the world did you come to be possessed of such a sum?"

"How do yer think? But hold on, I'm a-goin' to tell yer. You was always my best friend and, if necessary, I'll spend every cent of my pile to help you clear this murder business up. We'll hire detectives and we'll follow up that long-nosed Shortliff an' t'other feller what I heard a-plottin' an' a-whisperin'. Yer want to know how I struck the sand, do yer? Then I'll tell yer, although I hain't breathed a word to no other livin' soul. I picked up fifty one-thousand dollar bills down in Coenties Slip on the night old Crumley was killed, right under the big curve in the elevated road."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A STARTLING REVELATION

IF the amazement of Arthur Lyman at the manner of speech adopted by Johnny Taws had been great before, it was now increased ten-fold.

"Mr. Lyman, yer won't give it away, will yer? I've never breathed it to a livin' soul only you."

And the hunchback hitched nervously in his chair, as though striving to bring a greater portion of his twisted form above the table's edge.

"Not much chance of my being able to harm you, Johnny. You forget who and what I am."

"No; I don't forget nothin'. I know who yer are and what yer are. Yer the best friend I ever had, an' yer as innercent of yer uncle's murder as a child. I knowed that from the fust, and I know who the real murderer is—that's why I made up my mind that you must be set free, so as yer could down him in the end."

"You know my uncle's murderer!" cried Arthur, springing to his feet. "Johnny, for God's sake, speak! Who is he? His name, boy! his name?"

But Johnny did not seem to enthuse, as the saying goes.

"Hold up! That there's the trouble," he said, somewhat dejectedly. "Fact is, Mr. Lyman, I don't know his name, but this much I do know—Shortliff's in the job."

"Shortliff—my uncle's bookkeeper?"

"That's the man, an' a crabbed, mean skunk he is; he's capable of it any day in the week."

"Tell me what you mean, Johnny?" exclaimed Arthur, endeavoring to calm himself. "Tell me the whole story in your own way."

"All right. Here she goes. Thought I'd surprise you after a while."

Johnny Taws took an extra hitch in his chair, bringing his eyes to a level with the center of a bottle which stood beside his plate, and thus began his tale.

"Yer recollect that it was a cold night that yer uncle was murdered, Mr. Lyman. Well, on that night, being dead broke and well-nigh frozen, I crawled into a load of hay that broke down in the Slip to get warmed up a bit.

"I hadn't heard of the murder then, an' of course wasn't thinkin' nothin' about it at all, when all of a suddent I heard voices talkin' close to me an' peepin' out from under the hay, I seen Shortliff an' another feller what looked to me like a tramp a-talkin' on the corner of Coenties Slip an' Front.

"'I've did the job,' says the tramp, 'an' I wants my pay.'

"'Get out,' says Shortliff. 'You did the job? Why, you hain't done nuthin' at all.'

"'Yes, I have,' says the tramp. 'I stuck the knife inter John Crumley's back.'

"'Yer a liar,' says Shortliff—them mayn't be the exact words, but it's as nigh as I can remember—and then he walked away down Front street an' t'other feller after him, an' I didn't hear nor see them no more."

Arthur Lyman stared at the speaker dumbly.

"Johnny," he murmured, "are you telling me the truth?"

"Hope I may die if I didn't," said the hunchback, crossing himself devoutly. "But I ain't through yet. Hear me out to the end. When they'd gone I crept out from under the hay. I seen a crowd around Crumley's store, and went up there. Then I know'd what it all meant, for I found that old Crumley had been killed, and was dead, with a knife-wound in the back. They say now that he was poisoned, but I say it's a lie, for the man I heard talking to Mr. Shortliff said he stuck him, an' when he said so he told the truth

"Then I came back to the hay-wagon. I wanted to warn you, for they'd been talkin' again' you in the crowd about the store, an' I made up my mind I'd go to your house an' tell you all I'd heard. Just as I was goin' to start, a train comes around the curve, an' all of a sudden a man tumbles off the cars and falls plump on top of the load of hay. I know'd him in an instant. It was the tramp I heard say he stuck your uncle in the back a little while afore. I spoke pleasant-like to him, and asked him if he was hurt, for I meant to foller him and give him over to a cop, an' I didn't want him to suspect me, don't yer see? But he wasn't hurt a bit, and jumpin' off the hay, scooted across the Slip like mad. I was jest a-goin' to foller, when I seen suthin' on the sidewalk an' picked it up. That's how I struck my pile, Mr. Lyman. It was fifty one-thousand-dollar bills."

Long after he had retired to the little bed-room in which his change of clothes had been made, Arthur Lyman remained pondering on the strange story of Johnny Taws. He began to undress and prepare for bed. In doing so he had occasion to approach the window, and paused for a moment to look out between the turned slats of the closed blinds. A long stretch of back-yards met his gaze, with a rear view of what seemed an interminable row of shabby brick houses fronting the street beyond. As he gazed idly upon the scene a curtain was suddenly drawn at the window of the house immediately in the rear of the one in which he was, and the frightened face of a girl pressed against the panes. Then as suddenly a stout, coarse-looking woman appeared, who, placing her hand roughly upon the girl's shoulder, dragged her back into the room. Instantly the curtain was drawn again—this time by a man—and the room which had before been brightly lighted became entirely dark.

The effect of this pantomime upon Arthur Lyman was marvelous. With a sharp exclamation of astonishment he threw up the window and flung open the blinds. The stout woman had been instantly recognized by him as Mrs. Crumley, his aunt, while in the frightened girl he had seen, with equal plainness, none other than Louise Crumley, his affianced wife.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

AT THE HOUSE IN BRIDGE STREET

"WELL, and how's the girl?"

"As meek and pliable as a young lamb."

"Then you did as we directed—you gave her the dose?"

"You bet. I'm sick and tired of this here solitary confinement. It don't agree with my constitution—never did. Are you going to take her away to-night?"

"We'll see about that," replied Richard Shortliff—late bookkeeper for Crumley & Co.—as he turned from the bloated figure of Jack Butters to greet Madame Crumley, who now entered the room.

The scene was a cheaply-furnished parlor in the mysterious house in Ridge street. The time, between eleven and twelve on the night of Arthur Lyman's escape from the Tombs.

Jack Butters, with an old woman, a former dependent of Madame Crumley's, had charge of the house. The object of these visits will presently be made plain.

"Leave us now, Jack," said Shortliff, as Madame Crumley, with much puffing and blowing, began to remove her outer wraps. "Tell Mag to get everything ready for Miss Crumley's departure, for to-night we are to take her home."

"And I'm mighty glad of it," muttered Mr. Butters, as he turned to depart. "I never had a meaner job than this. Playing jailer to a helpless girl don't suit a man of my makeup for a cent."

"Do, for heaven's sake, pay that odious fellow and get rid of him," said Madame Crumley, as she adjusted her hair before a cracked looking-glass. "The sight of his face makes me sick every time I look at it. Beside that, he knows a great deal too much for our good."

"That's easier said than done," replied Shortliff crossly. "Where's the money coming from? You ain't got it and I ain't. If I hadn't lost the fifty thousand dollars, I'd have settled his case long ago."

"That was the most stupid thing I ever heard of. How you came to drop that money in the street is more than I can understand."

Madame Crumley would have understood plainly enough, had she been aware of the means chosen by Shortliff to settle with Jack Butters. The little incident of the elevated train had evidently not been told.

"Never mind," answered the bookkeeper quickly, "we'll soon be able to adjust matters to our satisfaction. Did you hear the newsboys crying 'Extra!' as you came down from the house?"

"Yes; what is it about?"

"Another set-back for us; but one which will not interfere with our plans—Arthur has escaped from the Tombs."

"No!" exclaimed stout Madame Crumley, turning pale and sinking into a chair.

"It's yes, though. He escaped to-night between five and six. Read that and see for yourself."

He handed out an extra edition of an evening paper and watched the woman while she read.

"Dick, what shall we do?" whispered Madame Crumley, in an agitated tone.

"Do—nothing! Do just what we were going to do before. This escape will only serve to confirm the public belief in Arthur's guilt. He will never dare to show his face, and can in no way interfere with our plans. For what time have you arranged the marriage?"

"For six o'clock to-morrow evening."

"Did you see Mr. Springsteed to-day?"

"I saw him this morning. I told him that Louise would return from the country to-night, and that you would be married to-morrow at the time just named."

"Did you ask him to be present?"

"I had to, Dick. He is an old man and unsuspicious. We will have the rooms as dark as possible. Neither he nor the clergyman will suspect the condition of Louise if we are shrewd."

"It is the boldest move we have yet made," said Shortliff musingly; "but if we expect to secure this fortune and leave the country at once, which last is highly desirable, I see no other way. I don't believe you could gain the consent of Louise to this marriage if you were to try for a hundred years."

"Louise believes she is my daughter, for I have taken care that she should never think anything else. You and I know that she is the daughter of Henry Ratcliffe, a cousin of Mr. Crumley's, who went to India, after the death of his wife, many years ago, leaving her an infant in our charge. Before he had been three years in India, Mr. Ratcliffe died. During that time he had, by shrewd speculation, amassed a fortune, which now amounts to many millions. This was left in the hands of Mr. Springsteed, a lawyer in Calcutta, with directions to pay it over to my husband when Louise had attained her eighteenth year. If Mr. Crumley died meanwhile it was to be paid to Louise on her marriage day, and not before. Another

singular provision of the will was that Louise was to be kept in complete ignorance of the wealth in store for her, in order to protect her from fortune-hunters, who might seek her hand.

"The time has come at last, Dick; Mr. Crumley, thank fortune, is dead; Mr. Springsteed, the Calcutta lawyer, is now in New York, ready to pay the money over. It amounts to five millions in all, and this marriage once recognized, the hour of our success will have come."

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Shortliff impatiently. "There's no use of going over it all for the hundredth time. As I have been looking forward to this for years, I ought to be well posted in the details, I should say. Come, let us go to Louise at once. If the drug has done its work, the sooner we remove her from this house the better. I saw that infernal detective, Timothy Chase, spying about only yesterday. His presence here means no good for us."

To this proposition Madame Crumley gave ready assent, and both left the room. In the hall they encountered an old woman of common appearance and shabbily dressed.

"We are going up, Mag," said Madame Crumley. "I'll thank you for the key."

"Here it is, ma'am," replied the woman obsequiously. "I've all the young lady's things ready, just as Mr. Butters told me."

"Then take them out and put them in the automobile; it is waiting at the curb. We shall take my daughter away to-night."

A moment later and the precious pair had ascended the stairs and entered the rear room of the floor above. The sight which met their gaze seemed to cause neither the slightest surprise, and yet it was a sight sufficiently pitiful to have melted a heart of stone. The room was plainly yet comfortably furnished. It was lighted by a lamp which stood upon a table, by the side of which an easy-chair was drawn. Seated in the chair was Louise Crumley, more beautiful than ever, but with face sadly changed. Her long hair hung loosely about her shoulders, and instead of their usual quick vivacity, her eyes were dull and heavy. One arm rested indolently upon the side of the chair, the other being raised and her face leaning upon the hand. And that face, so fair in all its outlines, was now expressionless. It was the face of one whose brain had ceased to act.

Madame Crumley approached the chair, and laid her hand upon the girl's head. Had Louise indeed been her daughter, as all the world supposed, she could not have looked upon that pitiful face unmoved. As it was, however, the sight did not seem to affect her in the least, for she pulled the head of Louise roughly away from her hand. Shortliff, meanwhile, had carefully closed the door.

"See here, Louise," said Madame Crumley in a harsh voice. "Here is Arthur come to visit you. Don't you see him? Come, we are going home."

"Arthur—Arthur!" she murmured. "That's not Arthur —they took him away. Arthur is dead."

"Nonsense. It is Arthur," said Madame Crumley. "Come, let me put on your things. We are going home."

"No, no!" cried the drugged girl, with a sudden flash of reason. "I won't go with you. It is not Arthur. I will never marry Mr. Shortliff! Never! never! never! I say."

Instantly Madame Crumley was upon her, and laying a right hand upon her shoulder, dragged her away from the window, at which she had been sitting, Shortliff at the same time pulling down the shade with a jerk.

"The blinds of that window should be closed," he said. "One can't tell who may be watching us from the houses in the rear."

"No matter now," answered Madame Crumley hastily. "There, don't you see? She's quieted down again. Help me to put on her wraps, Dick. It is time we were off."

Ten minutes later the door of the house in Ridge street might have been seen to open stealthily, and Madame Crumley, accompanied by Richard Shortliff, with the tottering form of Louise between them, descended the steps, advancing across the sidewalk toward a taxicab which stood with open door waiting at the curb. Scarce had Louise been placed in the car when a young man dashed up Ridge street with the speed of the wind, and stood panting by Shortliff's side.

"Arthur Lyman!"

Richard Shortliff shrank back agast. Madame Crumley, with more presence of mind, scrambled as fast as her corpulent form would admit into the taxi.

"Louise, Louise, what is the meaning of all this?"

With a quick spring, Arthur Lyman—for he it was —darted toward the car. Quick as was his action, that of his old enemy, the bookkeeper, was equally prompt.

"Have a care!" he hissed, seizing the young man by the throat and dragging him away from the open door. "Another word, another movement, and I hand you over to the police."

"Neither one nor the other are necessary, Mr. Shortliff," said a quiet voice at his side. "I'll take charge of this young man. He is an escaped prisoner from the Tombs."

And Timothy Chase, laying a strong hand upon Arthur's shoulder, wrenched him from Shortliff's grasp. It was all the work of an instant. Yet another instant, and Shortliff had leaped into the car, which was driven rapidly away.

"Did you see? Did you hear?" he whispered to Madame Crumley, as he sank back breathless and with terrified countenance upon the cushioned seat. Madame Crumley laughed softly.

"Yes, Dick; I both saw and heard, but it did not terrify me. They know nothing and can prove nothing. We are perfectly safe, and our plans will be carried out as though this trifling incident had never occurred.

CHAPTER TWENTY

HIDDEN BENEATH A BLOT

PROFESSOR KESSELMEYER, be it understood, was the chemist usually employed by the Police Department to make official tests, and was in consequence well known to nearly every detective on the force. Being a man of great intelligence, and one, also, whose utter silence in all that did not concern him individually could be implicitly relied on, it had become somewhat of a custom to consult him upon matters even outside of his profession entirely.

With Timothy Chase he had long been on terms of especial intimacy, and the famous detective, not disdaining the advice of so shrewd a brain, now told him frankly under what circumstances he had obtained the broken tumbler and the nature of his suspicions—namely, that out of that tumbler Mr. Crumley had imbibed the poison which had caused his death.

He also introduced Elmer Romayne, and made that young man relate the story of his experiences in Bellevue Hospital, especially that portion which concerned the dying words of the tramp spoken at the midnight hour from the adjoining cot.

"What do you think of it all, professor?" he asked, as

Elmer finished his narration. "Does it not seem to you that my suspicions that the poison which caused the death of Mr. Crumley was administered in a glass of whisky in that saloon on Broad street are correct?"

"It has that appearance, friend Chase, but we must not decide too hastily. This young man who was accused of the murder—is it possible that he visited the saloon?"

"I think not. I have made careful inquiries, and am satisfied that he did not leave his desk until six o'clock."

"But after that? The acid was powerful. If Mr. Crumley drank the dose, he would have barely time to go to the store, which he must have done before the poison took effect. The tramp pouring whisky into the glass after he left received a diluted dose, hence the greater delay of action in his case."

"No, I don't believe he went there after that," said the detective musingly. "I know he went after Elmer Romayne here, and then directly home. Of course there is a possibility of his having stepped into the saloon on the way."

"He never did it, Mr. Chase," said Elmer firmly. "How I wish I had only waited for him as I agreed to, then I could prove that he came directly there."

"I see where your suspicions point," said the professor. "Shortliff, the bookkeeper, was known to have been in the saloon with him. The dying tramp said: 'I saw the other feller put the poison in the glass.' You, of course, are moving on the supposition that Shortliff was the man to whom he referred."

Timothy Chase smiled in a peculiar manner.

"Perhaps my suspicions do not rest as much on theory as you suppose," he said quietly. "Remember that Mr. Crumley was known to have had fifty one-thousand-dollar bills with him when he left the store. Remember, also, that the bartender saw him give Shortliff a large roll of bills. When Mr. Crumley's body was searched those bills were not found. Now, what became of them? That's the question before the house."

"That's something I can't explain, friend Chase," said the professor, shrugging his shoulders again.

"Perhaps I could if I chose," said the detective, with another of his peculiar smiles. "But I won't detain you from your work any longer, professor. I have taken the liberty of making an appointment here with certain parties with whom I have business. With your permission Mr. Romayne and I will sit quietly in the outside office and wait for them while you proceed with whatever business you may have on hand."

As he spoke, Chase produced a leather wallet from an inside pocket and proceeded to stow away the written formula given him by the chemist as the result of his tests upon the broken tumbler. As he did so, his eyes fell upon the piece of blotted paper which he had picked up from the floor of Crumley & Co.'s store.

"By the way, here is a peculiar thing," he said, taking out the paper and holding it up before the professor and Elmer Romayne. "I found this some days ago on the floor by the side of Richard Shortliff's desk. What remains of the words written upon it combine themselves in a most singular way."

"Kill—John Crumley!" exclaimed the professor, glancing at the paper, which he now took into his hand. "I should say it was more than singular if I were asked."

"Yes, but the words can have no connection with each other. See, one is at the beginning of the sheet, the others well down toward the end."

"True. But have you examined the character of the writing? Is it Arthur Lyman's? Is it the writing of any one connected with Mr. Crumley's affairs?"

"Professor," said Timothy Chase, with some appearance of chagrin, "you have made me ashamed of myself. I confess that I never once thought of this blotted sheet as likely to be of any importance. I begin to think you are a better detective than I."

"No, no, no, friend Chase. We are all liable to make mistakes. Examine it now. Who wrote those words—a woman or a man?"

"It is a woman's writing," he said at length.

"So I say. Here, Mr. Romayne, what is your opinion? In a multitude of counselors there is wisdom. Perhaps you may know whose writing this is."

Elmer took the paper and examined it with close attention.

"Why, this is most singular!" he exclaimed at length. "This writing greatly resembles that of Mrs. Crumley."

"Mrs. Crumley! How do you know? Have you ever seen her writing before?"

"There, see for yourself," cried Elmer, taking from his pocket a delicately perfumed note in a tinted envelope. "There is a written invitation from Mrs. Crumley to attend the ball which was held at her house on the evening of the fatal day, January 29th."

Timothy Chase seized the invitation and tore it eagerly from its envelope.

"It is the same!" he cried in great excitement; the 'C' and the final 'y' in Crumley were written by the same hand. If we only knew the secret hidden beneath that blot it might make everything plain."

"No trouble about that," said Professor Kesselmeyer quietly. "I can remove that blot of ink, friend Chase, as though it were never there."

"Then do it. We will find out who it was that this woman wished to kill—but perhaps I judged too hastily. Take off the blot, professor, and we shall see what we shall see."

Professor Kesselmeyer vanished into his laboratory with the blotted paper in his hand. In less than ten minutes he reappeared with an air of triumph on his face.

"Read," he said briefly. "You should despise no clue, however small, friend Chase. Read and judge for yourself."

The outline of the blot of carmine ink remained, but the writing which had been hidden before could now be read with perfect ease. It was as follows:

"My Dear Son: The time has come for us to act at last. Rum may kill my sot of a husband, but we must help it along. He is wholly ignorant of the relation between us. He little dreams that Richard Shortliff, so long his bookkeeper and confidential man, is in reality my son by a former marriage; yet you and I, Dick, know that such is the case. I despair of prevailing upon Louise to marry you. Her father's fortune—to be paid her on her marriage day—will soon be here at the hands of Mr. Springsteed, who has already left India, and may arrive at any time. If she is not married the money—some five millions in all—goes into the hands of my husband in trust, to be squandered in speculation, like all the rest. This we must prevent, and to prevent it we must act at once. Delay no longer, Dick. Remove John Crumley. If suspicion can be thrown on Arthur, so much the better. Think of it, and act with all possible speed.

"Your loving mother, Jane Crumley."

Timothy Chase, who had read the letter aloud, now folded it up and replaced it in his pocketbook without a word. Scarce had he done so when the door of the chemist's office opened and a singular pair appeared. One

was a young man, tall and handsome, the other a hunchback, extravagantly dressed and most horribly deformed.

With a joyful cry Elmer Romayne sprang forward and seized the tall young man by the hand. It was Arthur Lyman, his companion being, of course, none other than Johnny Taws.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

TREADING ON THE WORM

IT was in the darkened salon of the Crumley mansion. The occupants were Madame Crumley and Mr. Springsteed, the lawyer from Calcutta, India. As intimated by Madame Crumley upon a previous occasion, Mr. Springsteed was an old man, and in a matter of this sort not difficult to deceive. Upon this particular morning he had called in relation to the great trust he had borne during so long a period.

"At what hour does the marriage take place?" he asked, having listened to Madame Crumley's arrangement of details to the end.

"At six o'clock. It is now five. Louise is dressing and in the hands of her maids. Mr. Shortliff I expect here in half an hour's time. A brief wedding tour through the Southern States, with a loving husband to care for her, will soon set my dear Louise all right, Mr. Springsteed—on that we may depend."

Even while Madame Crumley was speaking, Richard Shortliff, the bridegroom-expectant, was an actor in a very different scene. In a small room upon the upper floor of a Twenty-seventh street boading-house that highly respectable gentleman stood half-dressed in his wedding garments, facing Jack Butters, who was slowly retreating toward the door. The face of Mr. Butters was red and swollen, his eyes stuck out like the eyes of a lobster, his speech came short and thick. Mr. Butters was drunk—very drunk.

"I want my money, Dick Shortliff," he growled, with maudlin accents. "You won't give it to me, and I propose to make it hot for you. Don't you forget it now, for I mean just what I say."

"Butters, you are mad! How can I give you what I haven't got? You understand my situation just as well as I do myself. Have patience until this night's work is over, and I'll make you an independent man for the rest of your life."

Had Jack Butters been himself he would have understood that it was high time to bring the interview, which had now been in progress for several minutes, to an abrupt end.

"This here's played!" he shouted in a voice loud enough to penetrate through the thin partition to the adjoining rooms. "I don't try to murder for nothing, Dick Shortliff, nor do I for nothing forgive a man who tries to murder me. I've worked for your schemes without pay long enough. I want a thousand dollars right now, d'ye understand? To-night you marry your girl, and to-morrow you'll be off to Europe. Where'll I come in then, I'd like to know?"

"Where you belong, you loud-mouthed fool! I'll stop your wagging tongue this time, or I'll know the reason why."

Richard Shortliff had sprang upon his tormentor, seizing him by the throat and shaking his head violently from side to side, until upon the bloated face a bluish tinge mingled with the fiery red. In another moment Richard Shortliff, with wedding garments somewhat ruffled, lay sprawling upon the floor of his room alone. "I'll fix him!" growled Mr. Butters, as he staggered out of the house. "I've—hic—stood too blame much already. I'll—hic—upset his kettle of fish. He's got money, an' he won't give it to me. I know he got that $50,000 what old Crumley had about him. Look out, Dick Shortliff! You've—hic—trod on the worm onct too often! Look out now, for the worm's a-goin' to turn!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

GATHERING OF THE THREADS

BUT how came Arthur Lyman and Johnny Taws at the office of Kesselmeyer, the chemist, and evidently by appointment, if outward appearances could be taken as a guide?

Upon finding himself in the arms of Timothy Chase, as the carriage containing Louise Crumley and her captors dashed away from the house in Ridge street, the first impulse of Arthur Lyman was to turn and flee. In this he was prevented by the detective.

"Hold on there, young man!" Chase had whispered sternly. "You don't want to forget that your place is in a cell in the Tombs."

Forget that he was an escaped prisoner! This was precisely what Arthur had done. The sight of the frightened face of the girl he so fondly loved at the rear window had been quite sufficient to make him forget that little fact, and to render him oblivious to everything else. Forgetting also the wig and beard furnished him by the prudent Johnny Taws for purposes of disguise, he had pulled on such articles of clothing as lay nearest at hand, and hurried around the block to the house in Ridge street, determined to ascertain the meaning of the presence of Louise Crumley there, at no matter what cost to himself. The result of this rash step is already known.

He had seen Madame Crumley and Richard Shortliff lead the drugged girl from the house to the car. The vehicle was gone he knew not wither, and he was again a helpless prisoner in the hands of a sworn officer of the law!

Now had that sworn officer of the law been as dense as many of these sworn officers are, he would have undoubtedly hurried Arthur, without even giving him a chance to explain, back to the Tombs.

But this particular officer happened to be the far-seeing Detective Chase; and as a consequence, by use of a few kind words and the exercise of a little common sense, he was soon in possession of all that Arthur Lyman had to tell. Then they returned to the Attorney street tenement and awakened Johnny.

Upon the repeated assurance of Timothy Chase that no harm should come to him for the part that he had taken, the hunchback at length told his story again. The outgrowth of all these developments was the meeting next morning in Professor Kesselmeyer's office. Upon the entrance of Arthur Lyman and Johnny Taws a long consultation followed.

Elmer Romayne repeated his story of the tramp; Arthur, ransacking his memory, gave information concerning the movements of his uncle upon the fatal 29th of January, and Johnny told of the conversation he had overheard between Richard Shortliff and his companion, repeating the details of the finding of the roll of thousand-dollar bills again. All hands then repaired to the police central office, where the facts in the case were laid before Inspector O'Brien.

The result of all these maneuvers was the issue of a warrant for Richard Shortliff's arrest. Armed with this document, at a little past five, Timothy Chase sallied forth from the central office, accompanied by the three young men. When Timothy Chase alighted from a Fourth avenue car at Twenty-seventh street, Arthur Lyman, Elmer Romayne and Johnny Taws stood by his side.

"Which house does Shortliff live in?" demanded the detective.

"The red brick with the high stoop," answered Arthur, pointing across the street.

"Then you three remain here," said the detective, "while I go forward and reconnoiter. The first thing to ascertain is—— Hello! What ails Johnny Taws?"

The hunchback had uttered a low, excited cry, at the same time seizing Timothy Chase by the arm.

"There he is!" he whispered, pointing to a bloated individual who came reeling toward them. "There's the feller what I heard say he stuck the knife into old Crumley's back as I lay under the hay-wagon in Coenties Slip!"

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

AN UNEXPECTED INTERRUPTION—THE END.

WITHIN the Crumley mansion all is excitement. The marriage of Louise, the supposed daughter of the house, has just been announced. The bridegroom is to be Richard Shortliff, bookkeeper for the late Mr. Crumley, who, attired in full wedding costume, has just arrived.

"Sure an' it's the most outrageous thing I iver heard of since I landed in the Castle Garden, tin years come next Choosda," exclaimed Mary Riordan, the fat cook, as, in common with the housemaid and footman, she witnessed the arrival of the groom from behind the muslin curtains which shielded the basement window. "The masther not yit cowld after being murdered the way he was, an' now to have such goings on! I, for wan, say it's a sin an' a shame."

Until five o'clock no one save the India lawyer, Mr. Springsteed, and the parties immediately concerned, had received even an inkling that the beautiful girl who had in those very parlors declared herself the affianced wife of Arthur Lyman, was to be married to Richard Shortliff, his enemy, at six. Of course no preparations of a festive nature were made. It was understood that, owing to the affliction which had so recently fallen upon the family, the wedding should be private and unceremonious in every respect.

Immediately after the performance of the ceremony, the newly-married couple were to start upon a wedding-tour. It was a quarter before six when the bridegroom arrived. He was shown into the parlor and allowed the pleasure of introducing himself to Mr. Springsteed, who was conversing with the Rev. Dr. Mildman, the clergyman who was to tie the knot.

Precisely at six, stout Madame Crumley, accompanied by her niece, entered the dimly-lighted room. Never had Louise looked more beautiful. In her bridal dress she appeared like a statue fresh from the sculptor's hand. Had either the clergyman or the lawyer been more observing they would have perceived an expression of absolute vacancy in the face of the bride. For this Madame Crumley had prepared. The position chosen for the ceremony was one in which that beautiful face was thrown entirely in the shade.

The moment had come. Advancing toward the unconscious girl, Richard Shortliff drew her arm within his own.

"Come, Louise," he whispered, as he bent over with apparent fondness. "This is your wedding—Arthur's wedding and yours. You are to say 'yes' when they speak to you—you understand?"

"Yes, yes," she answered dreamily. "Mother told me. I understand—I have only to say 'yes,' and they will bring Arthur back."

Leading Louise to the position prepared, Shortliff took his place beside her. Madame Crumley and Mr. Springsteed sat upon a sofa at some distance from them. The clergyman had opened his book.

"Hark!"

"What noise is this?"

As upon the occasion of the recent ball held in these very rooms, there are sounds of confusion at the outer door.

"Proceed—proceed!" exclaimed Richard Shortliff. "If unexpected guests have arrived we can attend to them later on."

The Rev. Dr. Mildman opened his book and began to read:

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here to witness the union of this man and this woman in the holy bonds of matrimony——"

"Stop!"

Through the parlors the command came in a full, deep voice. The door connecting with the hall was suddenly flung open, and four persons entered the room. They were Timothy Chase, Arthur Lyman, Elmer Romayne and the hunchback, Johnny Taws.

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded the perplexed Dr. Mildman, lowering his book.

There was no one to answer. With a sudden dash the bridegroom had sprang toward the side-door. Too late!

Bounding across the parlors, Timothy Chase had seized the wretch by the throat, as he snapped a pair of handcuffs about his wrists, Arthur Layman at the same time flinging a strong and protecting arm about Louise.

"You ask what this means!" said the detective sternly, turning to the astonished clergyman. "It means that this man is a poisoner! It means that he, by the aid of yonder wretched woman, his mother, caused the death of John Crumley, late master of this house, and would, had not overruling Providence interfered, have hung for their crime Arthur Lyman, who now stands before the world with innocence fully proved!"

The worm had turned! In other words, Jack Butters had confessed. Upon his fortunate encounter with that inebriated individual, Timothy Chase had found no difficulty in drawing from him a full statement of his share in the Crumley affair. It amounted to simply this:

He had been employed by Richard Shortliff to assassinate John Crumley. For days he had watched his chance when, upon the evening of January 29th, seeing the merchant seated in his office, as he supposed helplessly intoxicated, he had slipped in and stabbed him in the back.

That was only a part of Jack Butters' story. The remainder concerned Shortliff and Madame Crumley. He told how, by the confession of the bookkeeper, wrung from him on the night that he had attacked him in the street, he had learned that Crumley had been poisoned, and that he had thrust his knife into a corpse.

In his rage at his accomplice, he told also of the intended marriage, which Timothy Chase and his young friends arrived just in time to prevent.

It was not until next day that the full truth was known. This was when Richard Shortliff was found dead in his cell—poisoned by his own hand.

It came to the public in the form of a full written confession. The document was a strange one. It told of a relation born by the writer to Madame Crumley, and of the manner in which the murder of her husband had been accomplished.

The theory formed by Timothy Chase proved to be substantially correct: Upon leaving the store Richard Shortliff had encountered Mr. Crumley in an inebriated condition in the Broad street saloon. He had pursuaded him to give him the fifty thousand dollars he had about him, after which, inviting him to drink, he had slyly poured a quantity of oxalic acid into the glass. He had then assisted the befuddled Crumley back to the office.

Of subsequent events the confession did not speak, excepting so far as the loss of the fifty thousand dollars was concerned—that part of the story was fully told.

The assumption was that the body of Mr. Crumley, thrown forward by the force of Jack Butters' blow, struck the desk, causing the stone inkstand to fall to the floor, which, striking him on the head, inflicted the wound which at first had been supposed to have caused his death.

When Madame Crumley learned of the death of her son she broke down completely and told all she knew. This second confession, together with the statements of Mr. Springsteed, cleared up all remaining doubts. The mystery of the Crumley affair was a mystery no more.

It only remains to explain the present position of the actors in this strange tragedy, and our story is done: They sent Madame Crumley and Butters to Sing Sing prison. To-day Mr. and Mrs. Lyman occupy a palatial residence on Fifth avenue, opposite the park, and Timothy Chase—still one of New York's most noted detectives—gained his reward.

The sensational detective story, "The Ten Doctors," will be the feature of our next number. It is replete with mystery and startling situations. Read it.

PET BEAVERS BUILD THEIR OWN HOMES

THE two beaver kittens, Andy and Bim, when three months old, were caught in Lake Vermillion, near Ely, Minn., and sent to the University of Minnesota in August, 1917, and placed in a stream of running water beside the animal biology building.

"For the remainder of the warm weather," said Dr. Thomas Roberts, curator of the museum, "these beavers frisked and played in the water, content to live in the box in which they arrived. But at the first appearance of winter cold they exhibited the natural instincts of their kind and began making preparations, despite the fact that they had never had parents to teach them how to conserve.

"The first thing they did was to put aside their food supply. They built a raft by intertwining logs with small branches of trees. When this was done, they cut the wood and branches given them into short pieces and dived down under the raft with them. They continued to do this until they had a solid mass underneath the log raft. After a few weeks the log raft became water soaked and settled down on the mass of wood.

"Then the beavers began to build a house. They built a foundation of logs and mud on the bank of the stream which projected a little above the water level.

"The upper part of the house they made by standing branches and logs on end in a conical shape. A support of mud was built in the middle of the house and the branches placed against it. An opening for ventilation was left in the middle of the top, and all through the cold weather the vapor from the warm breath of the beavers could be seen coming out of the opening.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.
1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robt. C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Critenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, By Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, by R. Ingalls
18 THE BIRD-HEADED SPHINX, by Edith S. Tupper
19 A DOUBLE MYSTERY, by Dr. Harry Enton
20 THE MAGICIAN DETECTIVE, by C. F. Oursler
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon.
26 THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE, By Pauline Carrington Bouve
27 WHO WAS GUILTY? by Beulah Poynter
28 THE EVIL EYE, by Chas. F. Oursler
29 THE THIRTEENTH DOOR, by Edith Sessions Tupper
30 THE GAME OF DETECTIVE CAREW, By Leonard Jerome
31 LAW-MAKER AND LAW-BREAKER, By Beulah Poynter
32 THE COUNTERFEIT HEIRESS, By Inspector John Harrigan
33 TRACKED TO CHINA, by Chief Roger O'Brien
34 AFTER THE GERMAN SPIES, by May Halsey Miller
35 THE CLUE IN THE BOX, by Alexander Douglas
36 TRAILED BY A FRENCH DETECTIVE, By Rene Renaud

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THE LADIES' ORGANIZATION

By LAURANA W. SHELDON

PART I

IT was just 8.30 by the clock when Mrs. Ebenezer Deering finished her boudoir decorations. Letty, the maid, had been dismissed, much to her relief, from the scene which she piously, but mutely, considered the "very temptings of the devil," but the altered and almost grotesque appearance of the room did not seem to affect her mistress at all unpleasantly.

On the contrary, she glanced over all the preliminary preparations with an air of triumphant satisfaction.

In place of the usual "feminine appurtenances," as she of late saw fit to term them, she had substituted the following somewhat startling collection:

Mr. Ebenezer Deering's meerschaum pipe, tennis ball and racquet, gun, fishing-rod and large plaid golf stockings; Master Deering's bicycle, polo cap and a set of jack-stones, and last, but not least, seven new and highly colored packs of cards, a box of poker chips and an antique beer mug.

"There is nothing like 'the eternal fitness of things,'" she soliloquized mentally, as she finished her inventory of the apartment, "for if women will follow in the footsteps of men to the extent of playing poker they may as well have their local coloring effective. I can just imagine what a surprise this will be to the members of The Ladies' Organization!"

It was she who had insisted from the very first suggestion of the experiment that the gathering must be called an "Organization," it was so much more dignified and so unmeasurably less vulgar than the term "Club," which was always utilized as an excuse for mankind's nocturnal misdemeanors.

"For, of course, ladies," she explained, when at last her six highly nervous guests were seated, "we shall be nothing if not refined, even in this somewhat precarious undertaking."

But Mrs. Waldemar, a robust and slightly irritable matron of forty-five, gave vent to her satisfaction in words that promptly overcame the coldest shudder—they were so timely and withal so sympathetic.

"Now," she remarked grimly, "we shall see what it is that keeps our husbands at the club every evening, and perhaps in a little time we shall be able to do quite well without them!"

"I think, ladies," their hostess said sweetly, after the exclamations over her chamber decorations were ended, "I think we had better begin with about fifty cents apiece; that is, until we are perfectly familiar with the game, and are absolutely sure of our skill in playing."

"You are right, my dear Mrs. Ebenezer," Mrs. Waldemar said quickly. (She was so excessively nervous that for once she forgot to add the "Deering.") Then, while pretty Miss Spencer shuffled the cards in a graceful, but slightly unscientific manner, she continued to impress upon the others their hostess' most cautious and praiseworthy suggestion.

"Yes, ladies," she said determinedly, "fifty cents is quite enough for us to lose in one evening, and, of course, as we are all beginners we are bound to lose at first, but we must bear it bravely, for this is part of the discipline of the game, to be forced to control one's speech and facial expressions. Now I, for one, shall practice 'bluffing' from the very start! I regret that the word 'bluffing' is so inelegant, but I expected that when I first went out and bought the book! I knew there must be something vulgar in it or my husband would not have been so loth to admit that he was a player."

"Ah, well, we are all women together!" sighed prim Miss Nelson, soberly. "If there are many objectionable words in the game, I would suggest that we abbreviate them as we go along. That will not alter the science of the thing at all, but will, perhaps, save our feelings a little. It is a terrible strain to learn to play cards and drive an automobile in the same week, but"—here she sighed more heavily than ever—"a woman has to do these things nowadays, if she is really intellectual and progressive."

"How many cards shall I deal?" questioned Miss Spencer, suddenly.

"Three apiece, my dear," said Mrs. Waldemar. "I am sure that will be as many as I can handle."

"You are mistaken, it is seven apiece," said Mrs. Ogden, decidedly. "Why, how on earth could we get a house full or a straight flush with only three cards?" she added, wisely.

"What pretty pictures these are on the backs!" Mrs. Waldemar suddenly exclaimed, as she turned her hand completely over.

"And so cheap, too," said Mrs. Deering, brightly. "I bought them at a bargain sale on Sixth avenue. Just think, seven packs for only sixty-seven cents! But these are not so pretty as the red ones," she said apologetically. Then, as a bright thought happening to strike her, she turned to Miss Spencer and exclaimed: "Shuffle them again, my dear, and put some of those pretty red ones in with them! What kind of a car did you say you drove, Miss Nelson?"

"The Rumbler, of course, Mrs. Deering," Miss Nelson answered. "I wouldn't think of riding in any other. Let's see! It's my first say, isn't it? Well, I'll put down one cent. No, I won't either! I'll just wait and see what the rest of you put in," she finished sharply.

"But you must put in something, Miss Nelson. It's the rule of the game," said Mrs. Ogden severely.

"Oh, I must, must I? Well, I don't think I'll throw away my money if I don't wish to, Mrs. Ogden. But what are these chips for anyway? Can't I put in one of these instead of money?"

"Certainly. That's what they are for," said Mrs. Deering. "I bought those on Fourteenth street—only nineteen cents," she added sweetly.

"I wouldn't drive a Rumbler machine for anything. Mine is a thousand times better. Is it my ante, Mrs. Waldemar?" Mrs. Ogden spoke rather sharply on account of being far more interested in motoring than in playing poker. "I'll bet you five cents. Can you go me one better, Mrs. Deering?"

For the second time that evening Mrs. Ebenezer Deer-

ing shuddered, this time it was at her questioner's terrible grammar.

"No, dear," she managed to say, politely, "Mrs. Waldemar has went you one—oh, my! That doesn't sound a bit better, does it? Do get the book, Miss Spencer, and see what Mr. Hoyle would say if he was placed in such an awkward predicament."

The cards were all laid down upon the table, face up, while Miss Spencer tried to find the wished-for information.

"Oh, dear, these old masters are so confusing," she sighed at last. "By the way, Miss Nelson, did you ever hear such language as our minister's wife uses when she addresses the Sunday school? Why, any one would think she had no education whatever!"

"Yes, and she professes to be so advanced in her ideas," Miss Nelson answered. "Why, she told me the other day that 'progression was going the wrong way,' and that 'women were fast straddling the outer limits of decency by their foolish notions on progression.' Is it my ante, did you say? Why, I didn't know that hand was finished!"

"Oh, my! What a hand I've got!" Mrs. Waldemar suddenly exclaimed, disgustedly. "As if any one could win anything with only four miserable little two-spots! I just won't put in a cent, so there!" and she threw her cards down upon the table.

"I'll bet you ten cents, Mrs. Hamilton! Come, I'm sure you've got something, for you haven't said a word this evening!" Mrs. Ebenezer Deering urged her left-hand neighbor shrewdly.

Mrs. Ogden promptly looked over her hostess' shoulder, and seeing only a pair of eights, entered into the betting with surprising gusto.

"I'll bet with you, Mrs. Deering—oh, my! will it take twenty cents? Well, here goes; now if Mrs. Hamilton will only go out, I am sure to win it!"

"But I am not going out!" Mrs. Hamilton retorted quickly. "I came here to spend the evening, and I certainly shall not leave on your account, you horrid old creature!"

Mrs. Hamilton dropped her cards in her excitement, and would probably have shown even more resentment if deaf Mrs. Owen had not stooped for them just as she did, and their heads bumped together under the table.

"Oh, my! Get the smelling salts, quick!" she screamed, as she came up sputtering from the collision.

Mrs. Ebenezer Deering rushed to the shelf where the smelling salts should be, and grabbing her husband's meerschaum pipe (one of her up-to-date evening decorations), she held it promptly under Mrs. Hamilton's nose without once realizing her grievous error.

"Take that nasty thing away!" Mrs. Hamilton shrieked, coming to her senses in a most astonishing manner. "Isn't it enough that I should be insulted by your guests without your thrusting this—this masculinity upon me!"

It was very evident that Mrs. Hamilton's anger was getting the better of her vocabulary, but her hostess hastened to calm her angry feelings.

"Pray forgive me, my dear Mrs. Hamilton. You see the room is decorated specially for the evening, but I am sure the smelling salts are on the mantel!"

She rushed across the room once more and returned with a package of cigarettes and a couple of jack-stones.

"It's no use, the salts are gone," she said despairingly as she discovered her second mistake just before she reached the table. In another moment a bright idea occurred to her, and she flew across the room to ring the bell for Letty.

By this time Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Owen had fully recovered from their shock, and pretty Miss Spencer was playing the part of peacemaker by explaining what Mrs. Ogden had meant, in poker parlance, when she spoke so unfeelingly of Mrs. Hamilton's exit.

"There are so many unfortunate terms in the game," she finished, solemnly. "Just think, Mrs. Hamilton, it will not be long before we will come to jack-pots and all that sort of thing," she added.

"I shall alter that term most decidedly," Miss Nelson remarked sternly. "I shall speak of the gentleman as Mr. Potts. There is no occasion for such familiarity. Why, perhaps he was one of the founders of the game," she added, with a touch of reverence.

Miss Nelson was a spinster of decidedly unaskable age, so the ladies were all inclined to humor her modesty, although it had never occurred to them before that the term "Jack Pots" was necessarily masculine, and even now they did not half believe her.

But after the recent threatened conflagration between Mrs. Ogden and Mrs. Hamilton, they began to feel the necessity of caution, and it was just then that Mrs. Waldemar reiterated her intention to practice "bluffing."

"Let us go on with the game, ladies," she said, with soft persuasion, "and whatever one feels at heart, or whatever one sees at hand, let us by all means practice that form of discipline most peculiar to the game—that very commendable and really easy habit of dissembling our feelings by virtue of the art called 'bluffing.'"

This was such a long and carefully delivered speech that it gave the ladies time to calm themselves, and after three somewhat flighty attempts the vari-colored cards were again shuffled and dealt and the chips began an exciting rattle.

Suddenly it occurred to Mrs. Ebenezer Deering that thus far none of the servants had answered her summons, and being a great stickler for dignity of position, she went at once to the speaking-tube and commanded Letty to produce the smelling salts—she wished them at hand in case of further trouble. They were apparently not waiting for her at the table, for the game was progressing with alarming fervor.

"Five more'n you, Miss Nelson!"

"I won't play! Go on, Miss Spencer!"

"Raise you ten! Oh, do come in, Mrs. Hamilton."

"Not much. I've only got two ones!"

"Ten more'n you! That's all the money I have—can you cover it, Miss Spencer?"

"What shall I cover it for? No, indeed! If I'm going to beat, I wish to do it fair and honest! There's my last cent! Now, what have you got?"

"You should 'call me,' my dear; it's more scientific. I have five kings and two red aces!"

"For goodness sake, who shuffled those cards?" The exclamation was unanimous, and then for once every one stopped talking, and looked at the other, and it was just at this moment that a long pole protruded through the transom over the door, and came sliding along slowly in the direction of Mrs. Ebenezer Deering.

"Mercy! What is that?"

The ladies all jumped and screamed in chorus. For a moment even Mrs. Deering was baffled, then she rose determinedly and investigated the offending object.

"Why, it's the smelling salts!" she exclaimed in astonishment, and then for one more moment there was complete silence among the ladies.

During that one moment there came to them distinctly through the open transom the sound of Letty's voice telling her beads as if her very life and soul were in danger. It was evident that she did not intend to succumb to the evil that surrounded her.

And then Mrs. Waldemar began placidly to count up her evening's losses.

"Just forty-five cents. Why that isn't so bad!" she said, with perhaps her most gigantic effort at bluffing.

"It isn't so expensive as automobiling anyway," Miss Nelson added, plaintively, as she pocketed her one lone dime and prepared to don her outer garments.

"Good gracious! would you believe it, I've won a dollar and eighty cents!" shrieked Mrs. Ogden, unexpectedly. "That settles it, ladies, you must come to my house for the game next week—why, my dear Miss Nelson, the pleasure of motoring is nothing to be compared with the satisfaction of winning in a game of poker!"

PART TWO

MRS. OGDEN was a lady who thoroughly believed in the emancipation of her sex, and it was with this spirit of emancipation rampant in her breast that she prepared for the first game that had ever invaded the precincts of her parlor. In the center of the room, almost within reach of the card table, she had caused to be stationed one of the very latest kinetoscopes containing an exact representation of the most remarkable prize fights on record, and conspicuous upon the mantel were two ugly looking fencing swords and a pair of hideous boxing gloves.

She had removed all bits of feminine handiwork from the room and draped the walls with unnumbered flags so as to give the great American game a fitting background of the national colors.

She was a trifle surprised when prim Miss Nelson entered clad in a leather automobiling suit whose design and contour baffled even her powers of description. There was character (Miss Nelson's character) written all over the suit from the progressive instinct demonstrated by the bloomer legs to the modest and virgin coat skirts which descended until they completely covered the former. Her hat was a go-between for either sex—a sort of cross between an Alpine and a sailor. But in spite of herself she could not help pinning a pale pink rose on the brim—without the rose she would have felt unmaidenly in spite of her hankerings toward the ultra progressive.

Mrs. Hamilton had taken the precaution to bring a bottle of smelling salts with her, and Mrs. Owen, who was always getting her head bumped and seeing all sorts of astronomical phenomena in consequence of moving at the wrong time, came armed with a formidable-looking ear trumpet, so as to keep herself informed, if possible, on the proper moment for responsive action.

Mrs. Waldemar unearthed a small hand mirror from the bottom of her reticule and quietly laid it at her place upon the table. "She was determined," she said, "to conquer the art of bluffing, and how was she to know that her features were in repose if she had no instantaneous method of observing them?"

"I move that we make it a quarter ante and a five-cent limit, then we can all buy a dollar's worth of chips," said Miss Spencer, who had evidently been studying Hoyle, and Mrs. Ogden, still glorying in the possession of her last week's winnings, was remarkably eager in sustaining the motion.

"And I move, secondly, that we do very little talking," Mrs. Waldemar put in kindly. "It is more scientific—more like real gambling," she added, blushing slightly.

"Oh, Mrs. Waldemar, pray don't use the word 'gambling' in connection with our innocent game!" Miss Nelson begged dramatically. "Why, do you know that is exactly what the minister's wife called it when I told her of our little 'organization'!"

"Oh, she did, did she!" Mrs. Waldemar said angrily. "Well, I'd like to know what right she has to heap such epithets upon our inoffensive little amusement! Here, you deal, Mrs. Owen! Well, if I don't give that minister's wife a piece of my mind to-morrow!"

In her excitement Mrs. Waldemar thrust the pack of cards into poor Mrs. Owen's ear trumpet instead of her hand, and for a moment that lady's tympanum was so overwhelmed with roars of confused sound that she involuntarily dropped the instrument and the cards flew out in all directions.

"Do you still drive that same auto, Miss Nelson?" Miss Spencer asked as they were crawling around picking up the cards upon the carpet.

"Goodness, no! I've had three different ones since last week!" Miss Nelson answered with her lips closed tightly upon seven offending bits of pasteboard. "You have to change every day to keep up with the new inventions. I have one now with a music box under the cowl that plays 'Heaven Is My Home' and 'I Want To Be An Angel.' It's a perfect beauty!" she exclaimed in tight-lipped ecstasy.

"Pooh! Mine's got a patent rocking chair and balloon attachment!" Miss Spencer said exultingly. "Just think, you can rock yourself to sleep under a shady tree or fly right over a fence when you see a car coming! Oh, it's great, I tell you, Miss Nelson! I am sure yours can't be anything to compare with it!"

Miss Nelson's face was almost purple with rage, but the polished backs of the cards had gotten moist and were sticking her lips together so he could not speak, and Mrs. Ogden improved the opportunity by calling them all sharply to order. "Ladies! Ladies!" she exclaimed. "Do please be seated at the table. It is getting late and we haven't even begun! Here, Mrs. Ebenezer Deering, do please take the cards and shuffle!"

"I hope you haven't five kings in this pack, Mrs. Ogden!" Mrs. Waldemar said sharply.

"I am no cheat, Mrs. Waldemar!" her hostess replied with dignity. "And that makes me think of something my husband said about your husband last night. It was—but I suppose I'd better not tell, you'll only get mad if I do!"

"You may as well tell it now that you have hinted at it!" Mrs. Waldemar retorted quickly. "I'm sure it can't be any worse than what my husband has said about yours a dozen times!"

"I guess your husband is a good deal of a gossip anyway, Mrs. Waldemar! My husband says he's a regular old granny at the club!"

"And mine says yours don't pay his debts, Mrs. Ogden, so now which do you think is the worst of the two?" Mrs. Waldemar retorted.

"Ladies! Ladies! You are forgetting to bluff!" called Miss Spencer sharply, but again essaying to act the rôle of peacemaker.

Mrs. Waldemar grabbed her hand-glass and thrust it deep down into her bag.

"You don't suppose I'll try to hide my feelings from her, do you?" she cried, with her eyes fairly blazing.

"And you don't suppose I'll ever play any more with her, do you?" retorted Mrs. Ogden, growing purple.

For a moment a miniature riot seemed inevitable, and Mrs. Owen, for the second time that evening, had grievous reason to regret the presence of her ear trumpet. "There were times," she soliloquized mentally, "when even a deaf woman heard too much."

But after Mrs. Waldemar had taken her indignant departure she had more reason for her assertion than ever.

"What a spiteful old thing she is, anyway! Don't you

mind anything about her, Mrs. Ogden!" said Mrs. Nelson consolingly.

"Her mother was nothing but a dressmaker, if she did have a coat-of-arms and all that family silver!" Mrs. Deering echoed.

"How do you suppose old Waldemar came to marry her, anyway? There isn't a thing good-looking about her!" Miss Spencer declared promptly, then she handed the cards around once more, this time giving the correct number, and their attention was called to their prospective chances.

Mrs. Ogden held two small pairs at the very start, and when she drew a "house full," as she called it, there was perfect affability once more upon her countenance.

Mrs. Owen had two jacks, but could not improve it, so she very gladly "went out" in the second hand rather than "risk her new silver dollar."

Miss Nelson had three queens and could hardly restrain herself from showing them to everybody. Mrs. Deering couldn't see anything in her hand, although she held a very good straight, so she threw it up and went over to look into the kinetoscope.

Mrs. Hamilton, seeing that her cards were all of a color, thought she would amuse herself by bluffing, but after several searchings through the reference book she discovered the value of her hand and became almost hysterical.

Miss Spencer had absolutely nothing, and having sense enough to know it, she, too, dropped out and went over to the pier glass to arrange her frizzes. Mrs. Ogden started proceedings with a five-cent ante and a ten-cent bet as usual, which was distinctly in opposition to the arranged proceedings. She would have her way, however, and was so pugilistic in her demeanor that she frightened Miss Nelson so that she forfeited her ante and went over to the pier glass to talk touring cars with Miss Spencer. After that Mrs. Ogden waxed bold and reckless in the betting, and the self-confident expression of her face spoke plainly of her anticipated victory.

"It is a glorious game, isn't it, Mrs. Hamilton? I am going to have a suit made on purpose for our evenings! By the way, have you seen the Fashion Book for October?"

Then she "saw" Mrs. Hamilton's bet of ten cents and raised her ten more in the regular stereotyped fashion.

"I suppose it is a good game if you win! What kind of a suit will you have? Mrs. Hamilton answered rather sadly as she went on and duplicated her opponent's action.

"Oh, the winning does not make any difference at all!" Mrs. Ogden declared glibly. "There's ten more'n you, Mrs. Hamilton! I think I'll have dark-green cloth with large white poker chips for buttons! I'm sure it would not make any difference to me whether I won or lost. It's the game that is so attractive! Why, you must have a wonderful hand, Mrs. Hamilton, to be holding out so very bravely!"

Mrs. Hamilton bit her lips and her voice trembled as she reiterated the customary raise, and in a moment Mrs. Deering had left the prize fight and was bending sympathetically above her shoulder.

"Oh, what a lovely hand!" she exclaimed as she caught sight of Mrs. Hamilton's cards, and in another moment Miss Spencer had rushed across the room and exclaimed just as lustily in behalf of Mrs. Ogden:

"Oh, my! I know you'll beat, dear Mrs. Ogden! I never saw such lovely cards!" she exclaimed rapturously. "Oh, I must see what Mrs. Hamilton has!" and in another moment she was on the other side of the table.

"There's ten more'n you and that's all!" Mrs. Ogden exclaimed suddenly. She had used every chip on her side of the table and her opponent had about finished the others.

"There's mine! Now let's see 'em!" cried Mrs. Hamilton faintly.

"I've got a 'house full.' It's mine!" shouted Mrs. Ogden as she reached out both hands to grasp the pile upon the table.

"It's mine! Don't you touch it!" screamed Mrs. Hamilton as she, too, flung out her arms and tried to cover the precious money.

"It ain't! It's mine!" shrieked Mrs. Ogden. "Why, you've got nothing in your hand but a lot of red cards; there ain't any two alike," she shouted exultantly.

"It's a royal flush, I tell you! And it's mine, every penny of it!"

Mrs. Hamilton was almost crying, but her voice was growing stronger, and for a moment, as the two ladies glared at each other, the situation was really appalling.

Mrs. Owen threw her trumpet under the table in a determined effort not to hear any more of it than she could help, and if Miss Spencer had not suddenly thought to look up Hoyle on the subject of values, the thing might have come to a serious ending.

"A royal flush wins!" she said at last. "See, here is the very latest authority!"

Both ladies still had a grip upon the money, but after a short pause Mrs. Ogden very reluctantly loosened her hold and Mrs. Hamilton began to gather up her winnings.

"Who ever knew there was such a thing as a royal flush in a game of poker?" Miss Ogden muttered as she got up and turned her back upon the assembled company.

"I did!" Mrs. Hamilton called after her tauntingly, and then with a sudden reaction of exuberant spirits she sprang from her chair and, running after her hostess, brought her back very gracefully to the table.

"Come around to my house next week, Mrs. Ogden," she said gaily, "and I'll give you a chance to win back all this money. Of course, I understand that it doesn't make any difference to you whether you win or lose. It isn't the question of a dollar, is it, Mrs. Ogden? It is just the pure, unalloyed happiness of holding the highest cards that constitutes the pleasure in this grand old game!"

(To be continued.)

PROVE GROUNDHOG THEORY

TWO families at Cranberry, a mining village near Hazleton, Pa., are thoroughly convinced that the groundhog, disappearing with the advent of cold weather in the fall, comes forth from his winter quarters on Feb. 2 and then vanishes for six weeks more if he sees his shadow. Andrew Capes and David Witofski are the owners of two two of these little animals, which are so tame that they have become household pets.

Notwithstanding that they have comfortable pens in which to lodge, the groundhogs left their quarters when the temperature dropped below the freezing point last autumn. Where they went is a mystery, but both came back Feb. 2, known as "groundhog day." The sun shone brightly that day, and the next morning the groundhogs were gone. That of Capes returned exactly six weeks afterward, but the one belonging to Witofski did not show up until a week later.

The groundhogs were captured in the woods over a year ago by Witofski, who shot the mother and brought her young ones home.

THE SILENT WITNESS

By JOSEPH X. MORTON

"MORE snow," I muttered, as I looked out and saw white flakes falling pretty heavily. "I hope I won't have anything on hand until the weather clears. Ugh! how cold it is!" and seizing the poker, I gave the fire a vigorous stir.

Hardly had I given vent to my soliloquy than there was a knock at the door. I opened it, and beheld a lady and gentleman. I invited them to enter, and placed a couple of chairs at their convenience. But the gentleman said:

"We won't be seated, thank you; time is too pressing. We have been recommended to come direct to you, sir. This lady is my wife. She has been robbed of a dressing-case while traveling."

"Were you with her, may I ask?" anticipating his reply; for he looked neat, while his wife bore traces of recent travel.

"Well, no. I met her at the Grand Central station."

"Would it not be as well for the lady to tell me the facts herself?" I remarked, taking a swift glance at her face as she raised her veil.

I recognized her in an instant; not because I had ever met her, but from her photograph. She was a celebrated singer, whom I shall here call Madame Vernon.

"Unless something is done, and that quickly, the thieves will get away with their booty—a valuable one. Why, sir, in that case are jewels; some of them presents from crowned heads, which you'll admit enhances their intrinsic value considerably."

He spoke with an unwarrantable degree of impatience, as if I, not he, were responsible for the alleged delay.

"My maid has disappeared, too," said Madame Vernon, seating herself; an example which her husband quickly followed.

"Your maid!" I remarked. "Then we have a clue at once."

"I don't suspect her; at least, I do not wish to. She was invaluable to me," she said, with a sigh. "I never liked the girl ever since she persisted in keeping company with that fellow Bladgen. I had to discharge him for insolence."

"Clue number two," I thought, considerably mollified, as I made my notes.

"Your maid's name?" I asked, looking encouragingly at madame; for I could see she was much distressed and ill at ease.

"Ellen Winter."

"How long had she been in your service?"

"A year."

"Eleven months only, my dear," Mr. Vernon remarked. "I have the exact date at home."

"It is immaterial, sir. Do you happen to know, madam," addressing myself to her pointedly, as a hint to her husband not to interrupt, "where she resided before entering your service?"

"Her home is somewhere in Boston. I can't remember which street, but I can send you the information when I reach home."

"With your permission, I will call there myself. You remember, of course, when and how Ellen Winter left the train?"

I was hardly prepared for her reply when she said:

"I have not the slightest recollection of the matter."

"Did the train stop at Boston?"

"It must have stopped; but, strange as it may appear, I was asleep. I felt drowsy shortly after leaving Lowell, and only awoke to find my jewels and maid gone."

"Were there any other passengers in the carriage before your drowsy fit came on?" I asked, feeling an increased interest in the matter.

"Yes; there was a gentleman. He got in at Lowell."

Something in her manner—she seemed confused and dazed—led me to put this question:

"Did you partake of refreshment?"

Mr. Vernon rose impatiently, as if he considered my query an impertinence.

"Excuse me, sir," I said quietly; "I have a motive in what I've asked, however trivial it may appear."

Madame came to the rescue by saying:

"Yes; a little sherry." Ellen carried a flask of it in her pocket for my use."

"The drowsiness came on shortly afterward, I presume?"

"In about twenty minutes, I should suppose."

"And your fellow-passenger, the gentleman, did you see his face?"

"He was muffled up too much for that, and wore a soft-hat well pulled down over his face.

"Thanks. I will not trouble you with any more questions. The case is a simple one. Your maid drugged you, which accounts for your drowsiness, and aided by a confederate, her fellow-passenger, carried off your dressing-case."

I could perceive Mr. Vernon was impressed at last with my astuteness, for he smiled and rubbed his hands.

"Please do not mention your loss to others for the present," I remarked, rising. "This is my card. I'll call within an hour, not to make myself known as a detective, but simply on business. I want, if possible, to gain a clue to Blagden's usual haunts."

I found little or no difficulty in picking up some information about the ex-valet, and in the course of the afternoon was on my way to Massachusetts, sure of running my quarry to earth.

The snow-storm had increased to such an extent that before reaching Boston the train was blocked. Some of the passengers alighted, I among the number, as I preferred getting a bed in the village to remaining in the train to be half-frozen. I had to trudge some distance before getting to it, where I was fortunate enough to secure a bedroom—a mere garret, but still a shelter from the biting cold. The room boasted a grate, and I was soon seated before a cozy fire; but, not feeling sleepy, I thought I would go down to the bar-parlor and listen to the village gossip, just to while away the time.

The landlord obligingly joined me in a glass of whisky, and seemed in a chatty humor. In reply to my remark

that it wasn't often the village saw such an influx of visitors—one of the most remarkable occurrences of the year, no doubt—he replied:

"Not at all, sir. We've had something a precious deal more exciting lately."

"A fire?" I guessed.

"No; a murder."

"A murder. They're common enough."

"Yes, in New York; but we've kept clear of them. I have lived here as man and boy for nearly forty years, and nothing of the kind ever happened before."

"Robbery the motive, no doubt!" I remarked, not because I felt any interest in the matter, but for the purpose of keeping up the conversation.

"You'll find the whole account in your paper, sir," pointing to one placed in a rack.

After a little further conversation, I said:

"And now, with your permission, I think I will turn in."

I took up the paper, and said good-night, and was about to retire, when a railway porter entered to say that the train would be ready to start at about five in the morning. My worthy host promised to get me up in time, and having said good-night once more, I made a move toward the door.

"Excuse me, sir," he said; "but perhaps you wouldn't mind recommending my house to your friends? Here is my card."

I always made it a rule in my profession to read anything which might be given me, for on more than one occasion I have found it to my advantage.

G. WINTER,
The "White Horse," High Street, Milltown.
Terms strictly moderate.

"Winter!" I thought. "Why, it's the name of one of the persons of whom I am in quest."

Of course this might turn out a mere coincidence, but at all events I resolved to ascertain.

"Winter! The name seems familiar to me," I remarked, putting down my candle. "Let me see. Yes, of course, I know an Ellen Winter. She hails from Boston."

"I have a niece of that name," he replied; "a very pretty girl, too. No doubt it's the same person. Her father and mother are Boston people."

"I have not stayed at Milltown for nothing," was my unspoken comment. "Perhaps I can learn something more."

"She was lady's-maid to Mrs. Vernon, the great singer?" I remarked.

"Maybe; but, you see, we've not been on friendly terms for a couple of years. Her family and I had a sort of tiff, and never made it up."

"Oh, I see. People do fall out sometimes," I assented, hardly knowing how to find an excuse for continuing the theme.

"Ellen was the cause of it all. I had her down here to help in the business, three years back, and she began to make eyes at the doctor's son; so I packed her off at once with a flea in her ear. Her people turned rusty like; but I didn't care. 'Do your duty' is my motto, and I did mine by her."

Taking down an album from a shelf, he showed me his niece's photo, saying:

"That's Ellen. You recognize the likeness, no doubt?"

I said "Yes," although as yet I had never seen her, but from the description I received of her, I had little doubt that I was right. I was careful to impress the girl's lineaments on my mind for future use.

"And the physician's son," I ventured to remark, "what became of him? I mean, what did he do when your niece left?"

"He'd been going to the dogs for some time, and finished up by robbing his poor old father. He's not been heard of for nigh upon three years."

The landlord and I again bade each other good-night, and I went up to my room, pleased that the blocking of the train had not really delayed my mission. Placing the candle by my bedside, I commenced to read the account of the recent murder, graphically narrated in one of the Boston papers.

The victim was a post-mistress, the motive robbery; but the murderer found little enough for his pains: merely an old-fashioned gold watch and five dollars or so in silver. She had been stabbed in several places, and had evidently offered a determined resistance to the assassin. No clue had been found, but I had little doubt that the local police would be able to throw some light on the occurrence.

"The weather has cleared," was my last thought, as I fell asleep, with the moon shining into my room through a rift in the still snow-laden clouds. I had troubled dreams, in which Ellen Winter figured and, by a strange perversity of the brain, became mixed up with the Milltown murder. Being at most times a light sleeper, I was easily awakened on this occasion, especially as my rest had been broken by nightmare—a thing I was not subject to, I am thankful to say.

All at once I became sensible that some one was moving about my room. Opening my eyes, I found that my instincts had not played me false. By the moonlight which streamed into the room, I saw a man, with a pale face, red hair, small gleaming eyes, and a thick-set figure. Something gleamed in his hand like steel, but that no doubt was only fancy on my part. Thinking it might be one of the servants sent to call me, I rose on my elbow, and said, with a yawn:

"All right; I'm awake. I'd like a cup of coffee before I start."

Without vouchsafing any reply, the fellow, whoever he was, hurried out of the room, and I heard the creaking of the stairs as he went down.

"It's no ghost," I said to myself, "but real flesh and blood. I wonder what the deuce the fellow wanted?"

I had placed my watch on the matelpiece, and saw that it was there still, and that my valise had not been interfered with. It was on the chair where I had placed it overnight. I fell asleep again, and did not wake until I was rudely shaken, and told that if I wanted to catch the train I must be sharp. I dressed myself in a great hurry, and almost ran all the way to the depot, the whistle arousing the echo of the early morn.

"Hang the fellow, whoever he was!" I thought, as my stomach called loudly for something to refresh it. "He might have thought of the coffee, etc."

However, I was thankful enough to find myself a few minutes, I having caught the train by the skin of my teeth, steaming toward Boston, where I hoped to recover Madame Vernon's property, for the accomplishment of which she had offered me a munificent reward.

I arrived at an early hour; too early, in fact, to find many places open. However, I managed to satisfy the cravings of hunger at a coffee-house close to the station, and then sauntered down Market street to the address which had been given me as Ellen Winter's.

"She would be a simpleton to come straight home," I thought; "although criminals sometimes do make blunders. At all events, I can pick up scraps of information which will be of use to me."

The leading idea in my mind, as I walked along the streets, was that both she and her confederate would make straight for South America; Boston was so handy to the docks, and jewelry was somewhat difficult to dispose of when of great value.

Arrived at the house, a modest one, such as the artisan class would rent, I was pleased to see a card in the window:

"APARTMENTS TO LET."

So far, everything had turned out plain-sailing. Once in the house itself, I anticipated little or no difficulty in carrying my enterprise through successfully. But I had to exercise patience. The inmates were not astir; perhaps would not be for another hour. This was no great infliction. I was used to it all; sometimes having to wait for weeks, instead of hours, before I could strike home.

"Seven," I said to myself, as I heard the hour struck by a neighboring church-clock. "They are late folk indeed."

I took out my watch to see the time, and to ascertain whether I had wound it up.

"What's this?" I exclaimed. "It's not my watch. There's some mystery here."

Then it occurred to me that the fellow who entered my room at Milltown must have changed watches. But why? That was the question. The one I held in my hand was an old-fashioned watch, with gold cases worn quite smooth. Mine had an open-face and all the modern improvements, and as different from it as light from darkness. Some strange thing had happened to me through life, but anything more odd than this never.

"I must return to Milltown, and solve this mystery when I have finished the business I have in hand," was the only decision I could arrive at under the present perplexing circumstances.

A milkman came along, and knocked at the door I so wanted to see opened. After he had gone, I spoke to the woman who had answered his call, saying I was in search of apartments.

"Very sorry, sir; but they are let," she replied. "The people are coming in to-day. I ought to have taken the card down last night."

"I haven't made a mistake, I hope?" I remarked politely. "I was recommended to come here by a Mr. Bladgen, a friend of your daughter. You are Mrs. Winter, I presume?"

"Yes, that is my name. If you had been a day or so earlier you'd have met Mr. Bladgen."

"Do you expect Miss Winter home? I've a message for her," I said unblushingly; for I could perceive I had got hold of some one whom I could pump with impunity.

"Oh, dear, no. She has too good a place to leave in a hurry. You can come this evening, when my husband's at home; he'll be pleased to see any friend of my daughter or Mr. Bladgen."

I thanked her and left, having no further excuse for continuing the interview.

"Nothing could be clearer," I muttered. "Bladgen and Ellen Winter are confederates. My next move is to trace them."

By arrangement, I sent a telegram to Mr. Vernon, as follows:

"Am on their track. W. and B. are implicated."

I took a room opposite the Winters, and resolved to keep a strict watch on all who went and came, in the hope of catching one or both prisoners. The girl, once apprehended, would be sure to confess, and give information about her confederate. She, at least, was not so hardened in crime as that the law should have no terrors for her. To save herself, she would not hesitate to denounce Blagden. Such was my theory. Whether it would prove correct remained to be seen.

Nothing rewarded my efforts, although I never left my post the whole day. No one visited the Winters. The husband came home, and went out again; that was all that took place.

I bought an evening paper, and glanced at its contents. Among other items was an account of the snowed-up train. Underneath it was a paragraph that interested me immensely. It ran as follows:

"During the night the premises of Mr. Winter, landlord of the 'White Horse,' at Milltown, were entered, and a sum of money stolen. This following so closely on the heels of the recent shocking murder has caused quite a sensation."

Continuing to read, I found another item which threw me into a fever of excitement. It gave an exact description of the watch which belonged to the murdered postmistress, and that identical watch was at the moment in my pocket. Of course nothing was easier than for me to explain how it came into my possession. But the waste of time to me would be incalculable.

The inquest was adjourned till Thursday, and this was Wednesday.

I mentally anathematized the scoundrel that had placed me, so to speak, on the horns of a dilemma; at a moment, too, when success seemed certain. To come all the way from New York to Boston, only to be kept dancing attendance on a coroner's inquest was too much for my equanimity, and for the first time for months I lost my temper, indulging freely in what I might term private swearing.

On calming down, I reviewed the situation, and resolved not to do anything until the morning respecting the mysterious affair at Milltown, as I intended paying a visit that evening to Ellen Winter's father. I did so, and found him a very agreeable, communicative person. He spoke in the highest terms of Blagden, and hinted that he was not what he seemed, but would some day, on the death of his father, come into considerable property.

Over the mantelpiece was a framed photograph of his daughter Ellen, which was an exact likeness of that I had seen at her uncle's at Milltown. I chatted on, hoping to gain some information on Blagden's present address, but Winter evidently knew nothing whatever of his movements. I arose with the intention of saying good-night, when a letter arrived from Ellen Winter, the father making no secret of whom it was from, for he said to his wife:

"This is from our gal. The writing isn't hers quite, but it's from New York, and no one writes to us from there but her."

"Surely the Vernons have not been foolish enough to write to Ellen's parents concerning the robbery!" I thought, on hearing the old man's remark about the handwriting. "If they have, my game's up. I shall be compelled to throw up the job."

I reseated myself, resolved by some means to get hold of the letter, and read its contents.

"Good news, I hope, Mr. Winter?" I observed cheerily.

"Well, yes and no, mister. She's hurt her hand a bit, and can't write as she generally does. She's a capital scholar, is our Ellen; heaven bless her!"

I suggested something hot, as the evening was cold. Winter was nothing loth and, putting on his cap, went out for the liquor—at my expense, of course. The ruse succeeded admirably. We were sitting in the parlor, out of compliment to me, and his wife went to the kitchen for the hot water. Quick as thought, I pounced upon the letter, read it, and instantly formed my own conclusions.

It had been posted in New York, certainly; but was not from Ellen Winter, otherwise I should have heard from Mr. Vernon of her return.

"The plot develops," I thought, as I replaced the letter in its envelope. "To make assurance doubly sure, I'll telegraph my client the first thing to-morrow morning."

As soon as I could do so with decency, I bade the pair "good-night," and went back to my lodging to ponder over the affair, which, after all, did not prove such plain-sailing as I had anticipated. In the morning I dispatched my telegram to Mr. Vernon, asking him to wire me back at once.

I waited somewhat impatiently for the reply, which came in due course, and, as I had supposed, proved that the letter was not from Ellen Winter. On thinking over the matter, I elected to take the train direct to Milltown, or to the nearest station, for the village did not boast of one, instead of communicating with the Boston police.

By a singular coincidence, I found that the inquest was to be held at the "White Horse," the very house I had sojourned at.

As the coroner had not arrived when I got there, I seized the opportunity of chatting privately with the worthy host, Mr. Winter, who was more than astonished when I told him the purport of my visit.

"A pale face, red beard and small eyes," he exclaimed, slapping his thigh. "Why, hang it all, it must be the doctor's son. We'll have the handcuffs on him yet; my word on't, we will."

This was all very well; but hunting down the doctor's son would not pull my business through, so that on the whole, I was not particularly happy at the turn the events were taking.

Quite a new element of sensation was imported into the inquiry when I gave my evidence and produced the watch. I was the lion of the hour, and might have reveled in all kinds of liquor, if I had chosen to accept the invitations I had received. A light began to dawn upon me. The fact of Ellen Winter and the doctor's son having been acquainted years ago impressed me now with a degree of importance I had not hitherto assigned it.

The fact, too, of his having robbed his father three years ago, and then disappeared, was another substantial link in the chain of my reasoning. I remembered, too, what Mr. Vernon had said in my office about Ellen Winter's persistency in keeping company with Blagden, the ex-valet, after his dismissal. Lastly, there came Mr. Winter's hint that Bladgen some day would inherit a considerable property at the death of his father.

"Bladgen and the doctor's son are one and the same," I argued. "I must endeavor to assure myself of this. Then I'll track him."

While I was enjoying a parting *tête-à-tête* with the landlord, who, now that he knew I was a New York detective, gave me every information in his power, a man entered, well wrapped up in a fur-lined coat, and a clerical soft-hat. I could not help noticing his magnificent black beard; one of the finest I had ever seen. When he left, the landlord said to me:

"The gentleman who has just gone seemed to know you. At all events he never took his eyes off you the whole time he was here."

"An artist, no doubt," I replied lightly. "My evidence was so sensational, that my portrait will be much sought after. But speaking on this subject reminds me that I sadly want a likeness of the physician's son. Where can I procure one?"

"Never saw one to my knowledge. Yes, though, I have! My niece had a photograph of him. That's how I found out that there was anything up between them."

"Who retained it?"

"She did, the jade. You might see a portrait of him at the Hall. The old housekeeper would let you look over the place if you tip her."

As I had an hour or so to spare before the train started for Boston, I resolved to visit Milltown Hall, the owner of which was in Europe. Doctor Clenton had never got over the shock which his son's criminal conduct gave him, and had lived abroad for years.

A brisk walk of twenty minutes brought me to the Hall, a fine old building, surrounded by a park. Everything showed signs of neglect and decay. The old housekeeper, who was also caretaker, answered the door. A piece of money gained me instant admittance. I roamed from room to room, bent upon one object only: to discover a portrait of the doctor's son, if possible, or to obtain a photograph of him. Nothing rewarded my search, and I was about to take my leave, when the housekeeper invited me to enter her snug sanctum to take some wine of her own making. I glanced around in search of portraits, but found none. On the table, close to an old-fashioned family Bible, lay an album. During a pause in the conversation the bell rang, and with a muttered "Drat it!" the old dame hobbled off.

"All's fair in love and war," is a motto I firmly believe in; so I leave it to others to judge of the morality of my present proceeding.

Glancing hastily through the photographs, I came across a portrait of the very man I wanted, a speaking likeness of the fellow who had so unceremoniously entered my room at the 'White Horse.'"

To place the matter beyond doubt, the particular photograph was inscribed thus:

"To my dear old foster-mother, with J. Clenton's love."

I would "borrow" it. To whip it out was with me the work of a moment. Then reclasping the album, I replaced it in its old position. I had no wish to prolong my stay, and went in search of the housekeeper to say good-by, and thank her. Hearing voices, I looked into the room, and saw the man with the black beard in earnest conversation with her.

"Thank you very much, madam," I said. "Good-by."

The man gave a start, and his hand dipped into the pocket of his cloak, while his small ferret-like eyes gleamed venomously.

"A strange fellow, that! I wonder who he is?" I thought as I made my way out of the grounds.

Arrived at Boston, I went straight to the Winters, resolved to put my morning's labor to the test. The old lady received me as if I were an old acquaintance, little dreaming who I was, or the nature of my errand.

"Of course you know who that is?" I remarked carelessly, as I showed her the photograph of the doctor's son.

I had to wait a few minutes before my doubts were set at rest, for it took her some time to fumble for her spectacles and, when found, to wipe carefully before adjusting them.

"Lor' bless you, sir, of course I do! It's our John's," she said.

"Your John's!" I exclaimed, somewhat mystified. "I never knew you had a son."

"He will be our son some day. Why, it's John Bladgen! You know that as well as I do."

Here was a discovery; one I little suspected I'd fall across when my train was snowbound off Milltown. I felt truly sorry for the old lady, and had a twinge or two of compunction when I thought of the dire trouble I was about to cause her.

At my temporary lodgings I found a letter from my chief, directing me to return to New York at once to consult him on another case. This was somewhat rough on me, when I had unraveled so many tangled skeins, and victory seemed assured. There was nothing for it but to obey, and within the hour I was *en route* for the metropolis.

At the station nearest Milltown, I saw the fellow with the magnificent black beard pass my car.

"Hilloa!" I thought again; "again! Why, this makes three times in one day! Is it more than a coincidence? Will anything come of these meetings?"

To my surprise he entered the car I was in and, after looking keenly at me, took his seat. I was well muffled up, and had pulled my hat over my eyes as a protection against drafts—the weather was so bitterly cold. The train moved on, and we two were alone. From my point of vantage I watched him narrowly. He was studying a railway guide.

"A cold day, sir?" I said at last, changing my voice—a trick I was an adept in. I wanted to engage him in conversation, if possible.

"Yes; very. Going far?"

"Only to New York. You seem to be working out a puzzle. Can I help you out? I'm an old commercial traveler, and a guide is like A, B, C to me."

"You're very kind, sir; but I can manage, thanks."

"No offense, I hope?"

"None whatever."

A long interval of silence, with nothing to break it but the sharp ring of the rails over which the iron-horse was traveling. He was sitting directly under the lamp, which gave me an advantage over him from the corner where I was snugly ensconced. Apparently he had solved the railway problem, for he put the guide down and pulled out his watch.

"By heavens, it's my watch!" I muttered; "I have nabbed my man at last."

"John Clenton, *alias* Bladgen," I cried, rising, "I arrest you for murder and robbery."

The next instant I was upon him, but he resisted, and in the struggle his beard came off, revealing his identity beyond doubt. He was a powerful fellow, and knew how to put forth all his strength, making it difficult for me to pinion him. We were rushing through space at whirlwind speed, engaged in a death-struggle. I knew that, if I was worsted, my life would pay the penalty of defeat. He managed to get his hands free, and drew a formidable knife from his pocket.

The struggle recommenced with redoubled fury, and I must confess I was getting the worst of it, when the train stopped suddenly. This seemed to paralyze him for the moment. In an instant I had the handcuffs on his wrists. I had won.

Madame Vernon's jewels were recovered. He had them stitched in the lining of his cloak, and when captured was on his way to Spain.

Ellen Winter's fate was doubtful for a time; but while awaiting the day of execution, the convict confessed that he had decoyed her out of the train, murdered her, and concealed the body in the wood, where it was subsequently found.

Compare the quantity of reading matter in this magazine with any 15- or 20-cent magazine and you will find that we are giving you at least a third more than they are, for less money.

THE INGENUITY OF AN EXPLORER

IN order to obtain an accurate description of the route taken through an unknown country, there is required an amount of hard and incessant labor, of which few of us have any conception.

For example, William Junker, a Russian by birth and an explorer, spent five years in endeavoring to trace the course of the River Welle, which lies between the headwaters of the Nile and the Congo, in Africa, with a view to determining the position of the watershed between the two rivers.

When he was actually on the march, Doctor Junker wore a coat designed by himself, having numerous large pockets especially arranged for the handy use of his watch, compass, aneroid, thermometer and notebooks. From one of the buttons of this coat there hung three pencils—one red, for marking his route; another blue, for noting the rivers and streams; the third black, for recording the time of starting and halting, together with all the more notable incidents of the day's march.

In a little notebook, ruled for the purpose, the exact time of starting was put down, and, thereafter, at the end of every five minutes, the direction in which he was proceeding was determined by a glance at the compass and carefully noted, while occasionally the readings of the aneroid and the thermometer were taken.

A brook crosses the path. With the blue pencil it is instantly designated, as well as the direction of its current and its estimated breadth and depth. Every change in the character of the country is entered, as from wooded to grass lands, or from desert to fertile soil. The prominent objects met on the way, with their apparent height and distance, are all indicated. So, also, are the names of the tribes and any local information that may have been obtained.

The time and duration of every halt is carefully kept, as it is necessary to know the actual marching time in order to calculate the distance gone. Doctor Junker's average rate was a little more than three miles an hour.

When the night camp was reached, the first duty of the explorer, after supper, was to copy all the notes made during the day into a large book—one page, generally, though sometimes two, being used to record a day's march. If the nights were clear, the traveler's work would end with an observation for determining the position of the camp. This done, he felt that he had earned his right to rest.

In this extraordinary manner Doctor Junker traveled on foot four thousand miles through a wild country, a large part of which, of course, had never been visited by a white man, and the information thus derived was of great service to geographers.

A BABY IN THE CAMP

By NATALIE GEORGE

"GOOD-NIGHT, boys," said Ned Winters, as he rose from the table where, in company with a number of miners, he had been throwing dice in Mat Sullivan's saloon. "It's past eleven, and I've really got to turn in. I'm looking for that rich vein which, you know, I expect to find some day, so I want to be up early before the sun gets too hot."

"Hold on!" cried Seth Jackson, a big, burly fellow; "you owe me one game from last night, and, by hoky, you've got to play it."

"Keep cool, old boy," replied Winters. "I forgot all about it; but I'll play you two to-morrow night to even up. But, I say, old fellow, don't lose all your dust to-night, or there won't be any for me to win to-morrow." And with this parting sally, he escaped through the swinging-doors, just in time to avoid an empty beer-bottle which was flung after him.

The little town of Belmont, Nevada, was about as barren a mining-town as could be imagined. There was nothing but a number of rude shanties, by courtesy called cabins, where the miners bunked in numbers ranging from one to five. There was but one general merchandise-store —this, with Mat Sullivan's saloon, comprised all the business operated in this little new-born town.

The stage arrived from Sandy Flats about once in a fortnight, bringing supplies and the mail to the eager miners.

Ned Winters was a new arrival, but won favor from the start. No one could look into his open, honest countenance without at once liking the manly young fellow. He occupied a little cabin alone, some distance from the saloon. This, by his own efforts, was about the tidiest-looking of the lot.

After his departure the majority of the men commenced rolling dice again. The game was becoming exciting when the swinging-doors were suddenly flung open by a well-directed kick, and Winters strode into the room, carefully carrying a bundle.

He was greatly excited, and as the men eagerly crowded around to learn the cause, he exclaimed:

"Boys, I've had a terrible shock! I was about to throw myself down on my bunk when I discovered this!" saying which, he threw back the blanket covering the bundle he carried and disclosed to the astonished eyes of the group—a baby.

"Good Lord, deliver us!" ejaculated a miner, recovering his breath. "Where on airth did that come from!"

"Must hab come from hebbin, sho, massa; cause dere's no leddies 'roun' dis yer diggin's, sho," said a darky, shaking his woolly head decidedly.

But amid all the hubbub Winters stood pale and stern.

"If I had hold of the guy that abandoned that innocent babe in a place like this," said he fiercely, "be it man or boy, I'd flog him without mercy."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the bartender.

"But, I say," continued a grizzled old prospector, "what in thunder will we do with it? Who 'll take care of the kid till we find the inhuman critters who own it?"

This was a stunner. The men, for the most part, were bachelors. There was not a woman in the county. But even the toughest heart was moved to something akin to love as they gazed on the sleeping child.

It was a boy of about two years, and as he lay, with golden curls falling around his face, and his little hand tucked under his cheek, he looked like a cherub, taken from the painting of Raphael's child-angels.

As the men remained mute, looking sheepishly at one another, Matt Sullivan spoke up:

"I'll tell you what, boys, my opinion is, seein' as the good Lord sent him to you, Ned Winters, you'd better keep him, leastwise till the parents are found."

"Bully for you, Mat!" cried one. "That's the big ideal and a nice little scheme to finish off the game is this here: if the kid's parents can't be found in two weeks, and it 'pears like they've dropped him fer good, see, we'll throw a game of dice and put the kid in as a stake, and the winner takes him fer keeps, see?"

Winters pondered for some few moments. He knew it would be best to send it to some asylum. But when he looked at the child a longing rose in his heart to keep the little waif, if only for a time. And as the parents might turn up at any moment, the game was harmless.

So amid the jollying of the crowd, he accepted; and wrapping him up as tenderly as a woman, he carried him back to his cabin, accompanied by several of the men—ostensibly to help, but in reality to have the honor of fussing around the little cherub so strangely entered in their midst.

The incident caused so much excitement that all thoughts of play were ended for that evening. They spent the hours discussing and conjecturing where the child could have come from.

They were positive no strangers arrived that day, for the stage passed early in the morning, and it was empty of passengers.

Winter's baby, as he was already termed by some, was as sweet in disposition as his looks. He never cried; not even when some of the rough, dirty-looking fellows crowded around him, staring at him as though they had never seen the like before.

But the moment he caught sight of the tall form of Winters he clapped his little hands and crowed with delight when he was lifted to his shoulders.

He was fed on the richest milk that the camp afforded. And being able to toddle about, was left in care of a young lad during the day.

Thus the days sped swiftly by, and the time for the lottery was drawing near.

The advent of the baby still remained a mystery. The only clue—faint at that—was the story of the stage-driver, who said that he had for a passenger a swarthy-looking man, evidently a Spaniard, carrying a large bundle. He got on at Kingston, and when the stage stopped at Belmont, the man had disappeared. He seemingly had dropped out on the outskirts while the stage was in motion. This was all, and it seemed clearly a case of desertion, for the child's clothes, while neat, were of coarse material.

When all the facts were known, and the dice game was

destined to take place, the number selected to play might have been observed slyly cleaning and primping-up their cabins somewhat.

For though they would sever admit it, still it could be read that each hoped to win.

In due time the momentous evening arrived. The game was soon in progress, and the room was as hushed as could be. The deep labored breathing of the men sounded a lullaby to the golden-haired child, sleeping in an improvised wicker cradle on the table. Now and then a deep muttered curse was heard as some one made a poor throw. It was the last leg. The perspiration ran like water down the faces of some of the players, for that sleeping child was growing more precious than gold.

Winters was the only calm man in the room. His face was pale, but his hand was steady. For had he not prayed in his heart to God that he might keep this little waif, rather than it should fall into the hands of his companions who, though kind-hearted, were yet rough and uncultured and unfit to guard such a treasure. And his faith had never wavered.

He looked at his score and smiled, as Jackson cried out exultingly:

"Hooray, you sixes! The kid is mine! Three sixes and a five!" and he flung the ivories down with a roar.

"Hold on, you blamgasted fool! Don't crow till you're safe over the fence. The kid 's mine, I say! D'ye hear? Can ye beat that, yer mutton-head?" and Belden rolled off four deuces under Jackson's nose.

At once a great commotion arose. Cries of "I win," etc., plentifully sprinkled with curses, were parried back and forth.

To quell the disturbance and decide the game, Winters rose, and rolled, upon the baby's cradle, four sixes. In each of his preceding rolls he had scored four sixes each time.

Long after Ned had departed with his precious winning, the drinks went around, and all were drunk to the health and good luck of Winters and his baby.

A year sped by, and the camp was gradually becoming more settled. Some of the miners had dug out a little luck, which encouraged them to remain and build neat little homes; and it followed, of course, they must needs go away and bring back the wives of their choice to occupy them.

Winters still had the baby, to whom he had become greatly attached. He reminded him, he said, of a dear lost friend.

The little fellow was called the camp's mascot. He had grown plump and rosy, and called Ned "papa." Winters had christened him Stanley—"after a dear friend," he had said evasively.

One day he returned home, and taking little Stanley on his knee, he told him he was soon going to take him over the seas to a nice new home, for he had that day struck a rich vein of gold, which would soon make him wealthy. And best of all, he was going to get him a nice new mamma; for the girl he loved, believing him to be false—through a wicked friend—had married another. But now she was a widow, and he was going back to win her. All of which baby didn't understand, of course, though he nodded his golden head, and looked as wise as his smiling face would let him. Shortly after, Winters left camp, taking the baby, much to the regret of the community.

He took the steamer for Willows, Oregon, and arrived there one sultry morning. Leaving the child in care of a nurse at the hotel, he proceeded to call at an address, written on a card, which read: "Lucy Stanley Verne, 342 State street, Willows, Oregon."

He found the house without difficulty, and was shown into a neat sitting-room. A few moments and his first and only love was folded in his arms. When the lovers had conquered their emotions, she told him her sad story. She was only twenty-four, and yet a widow.

Her husband had died soon after a child was born to her. But saddest of all, when her baby was two years of age an uncle of her husband, whom she had never seen, died, leaving a large legacy to her child. If it could not be found then it was to revert to a cousin of his—a half-Mexican and a notorious gambler.

One morning her child was missing, and before night the dreadful truth dawned upon her that he had been stolen.

Learning of the will soon after, she at once surmised the truth—Don Jianini had spirited him away. But she could find no proof, and almost beggared herself to find him. But it was in vain.

When she had finished her sad tale, and was weeping on her lover's breast, he asked her suddenly:

"Lucy, what sex did you say your child was?"

"It was a boy," she answered. "Such a sweet, beautiful child, with long golden curls. Oh, God, it is terrible!" she moaned.

Winters' face was pale with emotion, which he bravely tried to hide.

"Have you a picture?" he asked.

Without speaking, she pointed to a large crayon portrait hanging on the wall. He stepped up to it, and after one hasty glance he could, with difficulty, restrain his excitement.

"Lucy, darling," he exclaimed hurriedly, "I must leave you for a short time on a matter of great importance. Stay right here, and I will return as quickly as possible. It seemed quite a long time to the wondering woman, when the door opened, and Ned entered, leading a little child by the hand. She glanced in wonder at the tot, and then, speechless, dropped upon her knees and opened her arms with a world of passionate yearning in her face. The natural instinct of nature asserted itself, and the little fellow ran into her outstretched arms. As she clasped him to her breast, tears of joy rushing down her cheeks, she cried:

"My boy! My boy!"

Ned was not ashamed of the honest tears that flowed in unison.

But after a few moments the baby-boy turned, and with a confiding look called:

"Papa, tum here; me want you, too."

Ned advanced and clasped the little outstretched hand.

Lucy looked up, the wonder and amazement showing through her tears.

"Lucy, dear," said he tenderly, "is this your child?"

"It is!" she replied. "Thank God! My little Stanley!"

"Very well, then," Ned replied, we will have to become partners at once, because he is mine, too; for I won him in a game of dice."

Stories by several splendid new writers will appear in our next number. Do not miss the rare treat we are preparing for you.

HIS IDOL

BY AN EDITOR'S WIFE.

THE artist paced the floor of his studio restlessly, his eyes were bloodshot, his hair and garments dishevelled. Only a few more bold strokes of the brush and "His Idol," a masterpiece, would be completed.

Dashing down the brush, he fell on his knees immediately before the picture he had created. His slight frame quivered in the violence of his emotions, while his eyelids drooped from the exhaustion of labor.

"Queen of my heart," he whispered dreamily. "My adored one, thou art, fairest of all fair women!"

Kneeling before the easel with tightly clasped hands, he raised a face that was pale and haggard. His lips were dumb after the first outburst, but he seemed to drink in all the beauty of the picture.

It was a woman's form, entirely nude except for a filmy drapery that floated about it. The face was one of most exquisite beauty, a face in which lurked the spirit of mischief overshadowed by the mildness of a noble nature. Her eyes seemed to dwell tenderly on the man before her; there was a gleam in their depths that well spoke of passion. In the eagerness of his glance he caught the gleam and it maddened him as though she were a living woman. Oh, that he could clasp her in his yearning arms! He half raised himself so as to be nearer to her.

But the canvas was wet from his recent labors, he dared not so much as touch her with the tip of his fingers. For three long weeks he had toiled in this room, never once leaving it for so much as a minute. His "man" had brought his some food now and then, but he only took a bite when he felt that he was fainting. But now that it was finished and his brain was at rest he still remained in the little sanctum. Something, a feeling he could not explain, seemed to make him dread to leave his picture for a moment. He had once thought of inviting the world to gaze upon this masterpiece of his really marvellous skill; in fact, this was at first the sole aim of his ambition; but now he flushed angrily when he thought of other eyes beholding the idol of his heart—she was as sacred to him now as a wife or mother.

He turned from her long enough to arrange his brushes. He was certain that he would never care to paint another picture, but even as he turned her eyes seemed drawing him back—the spell of her beauty was affecting him strangely.

"Sweetheart," he murmured in yearning tones, "I could sit at your feet forever and ever! Never have I seen such charm as yours—no living woman has half your beauty. If you were a living woman I would die for your love, but even as you are I am your slave forever."

If he could only touch her it would relieve the strain, but to worship so madly and yet not be able to caress her was almost too much for his ardent nature.

With a sudden resolve he sprang to his feet. He would leave the apartment until the canvas was dry; after that he would remain there and kiss her forever.

He parted the curtains of the outer door, his hand was on the knob, when he suddenly faltered.

Who had spoken to him? His heart stood still. With the instinct of love he turned and looked at the picture. Were her lips moving? He was sure that they were. He heard her say, "Sweetheart, come back!" distinctly. Almost without surprise he fell at her feet. It was not strange to him that his picture had spoken. With his eyes on the floor he remained before her. Now that she was really living he felt calm and humble. He would not even dream of caressing her now; it was enough to be allowed to gaze on such beauty.

"Why do you wish to leave me?" said the gentle voice. "Don't you know that I should be timid and lonely without you?"

"I shall never leave you now!" he answered firmly. He looked up at her then and their eyes met steadfastly. The thrill in his veins was unmistakable now inasmuch as it was followed by a new sensation.

He wished that he had draped her a little more modestly, but the picture evidently knew nothing of shame. How should it when its evolution was but a matter of moments? She smiled into his eyes as she listened to his words. It was enough for her to know that he would never desert her.

"How did I come here?" she murmured at last. "And why do you not kiss me when you know how I love you?"

It was all an outburst of innocence, he knew, and yet, if they loved, what would be the difference?

The world of his dreams was not the world where he worked, and the ideal of his heart was no twentieth century woman.

In a moment he thrust conventionality aside. But no, he was still artist enough to falter.

A touch of those lips would disfigure her now; still he could not explain his hesitation to her.

In all the years that he had dreamed of love he was never so conscious of heavenly rapture. Gazing into her eyes was joy untold, but to kiss her was to partake of the bliss of Eden. Nothing could surpass the eagerness he felt, but he sank back on the hassock, faint from self-denial. How long must he wait before clasping her in his arms, before the paint would be dry on all parts of the canvas?

He knew that she was pouting at his curious manner, but perhaps if he did not look into her eyes again he might have strength to hold out a little longer.

"You do not love me," she sighed in heartbreaking tones. It was almost more than he could bear to listen to her.

"I do! I do! My darling!" he cried, "but don't you see that just for a little we must be cautious?" he answered sadly.

"I don't understand," she replied somewhat coldly, "but perhaps you do not care for a woman's kisses."

It stung him to the heart to be taunted so. In an instant the man had overcome the artist.

Clasping her in his arms he strained her to his breast. His kisses fell like rain on her lovely features.

It was the voice of his "man" that brought him to his senses and tore from his embrace the blurred form of his Idol.

"Good Lord! You've been dreaming!" he cried in dismay. "And there's more paint on your face than there is on the picture!"

STORIES OF GREAT DETECTIVES

BY A NEW YORK JOURNALIST

The writer has had occasion professionally to learn a great deal about the real detectives. He has talked with them, corresponded with them, heard the narrative of their lives and exploits, and enjoyed in reality all the interest and excitement connected with these men that is constantly presented in the fiction of the day.

For the benefit of the thousands of readers of "Mystery Magazine," we propose to relate some of our experiences, and give a rapid glance at the most noted men in the different cities of the United States. The number of professional detectives is now very large. They are employed in every branch of the United States Government; all the great cities have a trained force, and the private agencies are to be found in all the cities, with correspondents throughout the civilized world. Our "Stories of Great Detectives" give, perhaps, the first familiar relation ever attempted of the characteristics of the great detectives who have made the detection of crime a new science.

PRYCE LEWIS.

ONE day we thought it would be interesting to have an interview with Pryce Lewis, a detective who was sentenced to be hung in Richmond, Va., during the war.

We went upstairs in a building in the lower part of Broadway, and sought a suit of offices on the second floor. Entering, we saw a tall, gentlemanly person standing before us.

"Is Mr. Lewis in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can I see him?"

"Yes, sir. Be seated."

We took a seat on a lounge. The gentleman did the same thing. We discussed the weather. Then the news of the morning. Next talked about the growth of the city.

Five minutes went by.

All the time we expected Mr. Lewis to enter from the adjoining room. He did not come, and as "time is money," we said to the gentlemanly man who talked with us so pleasantly and never asked our business:

"Did you say Mr. Lewis was in?"

"I am Mr. Lewis," was the reply.

"Is it possible?" we said in surprise.

Then, after a mutual and hearty laugh at the mistake, we asked him for some account of his adventures. He is a good talker, and the recital ran on for an hour or more.

Years ago Mr. Lewis went out West and became connected with Pinkerton's Agency in Chicago. When the war came the United States Government employed private detectives to go into the enemy's country and find out particulars in regard to the strength of the military forces of fortified places, and all other important facts.

Pryce Lewis was sent.

"I entered in grand style," said Mr. Lewis. "I was Lord Tracy, and had my carriage and servant. I had fine clothes, and especially remember my fine stove-pipe hat. My servant was another detective—Sam Bridgeman."

He laughed at the recollection.

He is an Englishman by birth, and could well assume the character of a lord. He has polite and easy manners, while they are dignified and impressive. His face is full of intelligence, and his eyes are bright and sharp.

"I told them I had served on Lord Raglan's staff in the Crimean war," said Mr. Lewis. "The military officers were anxious to get all the points they could at that time."

He penetrated into the country and saw the camps and fortifications. At times he fell under some suspicion.

The excitement everywhere was intense. A spy would have been hung on the first tree.

The governor, a very shrewd and observing man, came to that section, and the false Lord Tracy was obliged to sit near him at dinner.

"I tell you what it is, I had to play my part pretty well before that sharp old governor," said Detective Lewis. "When I thought there was any suspicion I bragged and blowed about England, and told what fearful things would happen if harm came to a hair of my particular head. I wrote a strong letter that Sam Bridgeman said would hang us if they found us out."

"You enjoyed yourself too?" we said.

"Immensely," replied the detective. "They could not do enough for a real live lord, especially when they were trying to gain the good-will of England. Why, one day they made me review the troops."

After obtaining a great deal of information, he found it difficult to get out of the country. He came upon camp after camp, and it required the greatest amount of brass and nerve to prevent discovery. He knew that some advised that he should be searched.

"It would have been all day with us if we had," said the detective. "However, we managed to get through the lines again, and our information proved of great service to the government."

Detective Lewis continued in the dangerous duty of a spy. He penetrated to a city where he was recognized and arrested and thrown into prison. He was sentenced to be hung as a spy on the 4th of April, but was saved. He suffered a long imprisonment.

He described his experience with the same zest and humor which characterizes all the rest of his conversation regarding his adventures as a detective. At the same time, he admitted that it was a serious period of his life.

After the war he established a private detective office in Chicago, and later came to New York and went into the same business.

In a few moments after leaving him we were again in the busy streets. We thought how much our recent conversation had illustrated the varied and astonishing phases of personal history presented in a great city like New York.

Here was a man now quietly pursuing a private business, who had gone through scenes of peril such as few men ever encounter. And yet, so modest is he, and so much is very one intent on his own affairs, that probably his office neighbors do not know that his life has been eventful at all.

Read about Charles F. Miller in the next article of this series. It will interest you.

SOME SCRAPS OF PAPER

A Detective Serial

BY POLICE CAPTAIN HOWARD

CHAPTER SIX

THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN

THE detective noticed this advantage which this accident gave him, and jumping forward, he struck out right and left with his fists, hit Suggs and Cole in the face, downing them, and reached the door in safety. The man whom he had wounded and the one who looked like the picture in the locket were after the detective in a minute, and as he was about to step out into the street, he was startled by a shot, which went whizzing past his head. Turning around, he saw that his enemies were within a few feet of him, and that Cole and Suggs were not far behind their companions.

Both the detective and the men commenced to fire at one another. The noise of the firing and the voices of the crowd caused the inmates of the other saloons to rush out on the sidewalk to see what was the matter. The detective was in a perilous condition, for the whole of Barbary Coast was closing in on him, and when the mass of desperadoes learned that it was a detective who had raised the disturbance and who was fighting with some men, a cry of vengeance arose, and those who were nearest to Foss drew their knives and prepared to slash him into shreds.

Bang! Bang! Bang! The detective's pistol rang out, and then a crash of breaking glass followed. He had aimed at the remaining lamps in the saloon, and had put them out. For a few minutes the smoke rolled out into the street in dense clouds, driving the crowd back, in spite of its desire to push forward, and hiding the detective, and the men with whom he had been fighting, from sight.

The detective took advantage of this, and after gring a parting shot at his enemies, he dashed out from the smoke, and before any one was aware of it he was on the opposite side of the street looking at the building, which was now enveloped in flames.

The alarm of fire had been sounded, and the engines and firemen came tearing up the hill. Just as Foss was about to turn away to try and find out where his enemies had gone to, he felt a tug at his coat-tail. Thinking that perhaps it was some one who had brushed against him, he paid no attention to it, but walked on a few steps.

The detective had not gone ten feet when he stopped and looked around. He had felt the tug at his sleeve again, and he had halted to find out who it was. As he turned around, he came face to face with a woman. The detective recognized the woman as one of the females he had seen coming out of the room with the men. As he faced the woman, she placed her finger over her lips, and whispered:

"Say nothing, but follow me."

For a moment Foss hesitated. He thought that it might be some trick to deliver him into the hands of the men. The woman noticed his hesitancy, and whispered again:

"You can trust me. I swear that no harm shall come to you, if you do as I say."

The detective made up his emind to trust the woman, and a minute afterwards he said:

"Lead on, and I will follow you."

The firemen were now at work, and were fast putting out the fire. The men who had assailed the detective were running in and out of the crowd, inquiring if any one had seen Foss, and when they learned that he had escaped, they were furious, and threatened that if they got hold of him they would stab him to the heart.

As the detective followed the woman, every time he attempted to speak, she raised her finger, and placing it across her lips, motioned him to be silent. Foss could not imagine what the woman wanted with him. He thought of the note which he had received, and then he came to the conclusion that the woman had written it. But why should she take such an interest in him?

The detective pondered this question, and finally gave it up. He could not account for the woman's actions. She undoubtedly was the associate of the men who were thirsting for his life, and was cognizant of all of their schemes, and perhaps helped them to carry them out. Why should she care to shield him? He was nothing to her; he had never met her before, to his knowledge.

The woman led the way down Kearney street, and then turned into a side-street running towards the water-front. She said nothing, and after they had gone some blocks, the detective grew tired of the silence, and said:

"Where are you leading me to?"

"A place where I can talk to you without running the chances of being overheard."

The street was deserted, and not a light was to be seen in any of the buildings. Every footstep that they took sounded loud, and the echo was thrown back from the buildings. Foss commenced to grow suspicious and nervous, and at last stopped under a gaslight, and in a determined manner said, as he faced the woman:

"You will have to tell me where you are going, or I will not take another step."

"I told you that I was your friend," the woman answered in an injured tone of voice. "Why can't you believe and trust me?"

"I want to know where you are going. You are an associate of the men who have sworn to kill me, and under these circumstances you must acknowledge that any one would be suspicious."

At this the woman grew angry, and said:

"Well, if you won't trust me, I won't tell you anything. If you don't make up your mind to come with me, I will leave you and return to the place where I met you."

Foss hardly knew what to do. He was afraid of being led into a trap, and still he wanted to find out what it was that the woman wanted to talk to him about. After

thinking a few minutes, he concluded to take the risk, and follow the woman. He felt in his pocket, and found that his pistols were safe.

"Make up your mind what you are going to do, for I haven't much time to lose," the woman said, when she looked at the detective, and found that he was undecided.

"I'll go with you," Foss answered; "but I warn you that if you lead me into any trap it will not be well for you."

The woman said nothing to this, but simply turned around and walked down the street, beckoning for the detective to follow her. At last the water-front was reached. The woman drew a heavy crape veil over her face so that she would not be recognized, and then turning to the detective, said:

"We have only a short distance to go now."

They walked on for about a block further in silence, and then the woman stopped before a low drinking-place, which the detective recognized as the resort of sailors and longshoremen.

"We will go in here," the woman said, as she opened the door at the side of the saloon and entered the hall, which was dimly lighted by a lamp which was suspended from the ceiling.

The detective followed his guide through the hall until they reached the back-yard, which was so dark that he could not see an object around him.

"Be careful; there are three steps here; don't fall."

The detective obeyed, and descended the steps. The woman now took told of his hand and led him across the yard to where there was a back-gate in the fence, which opened into a long and narrow alley. They then walked along the alley until another gate was reached, when the woman took a key from her pocket, and after unlocking the padlock, she opened the gates. She then entered the yard and released her hold of the detective's hand. From what Foss could see of his surroundings, he saw that the yard was at the rear of what appeared to be a large warehouse. The woman locked the gate on the inside, and then turning to her companion, said:

"In a few minutes more we will be in a place where we can talk without fear."

She then walked to the side of the yard and unlocked another gate, which admitted them into the next yard, which belonged to a large tenement-house. When the detective saw that it was a tenement, and that its main entrance was on the street, he wondered what was the woman's reasons for taking such a circuitous route when she could just as well have entered the front-door and saved time.

The detective and the woman were now standing in the hall. She looked around her cautiously, and when she found that no one was within sight, she ascended the stairs, closely followed by Foss, and finally entered a room at the back of the house on the top-floor.

After they had entered the room the woman closed the door, locking it, and then lit a lamp, after which she motioned the detective to take a seat. As Foss took a chair by a table, he found that the apartment was neatly furnished; and from the arrangement of the furniture and pictures, he saw that the owner possessed a great deal of taste.

"Now I can talk to you without fear," said the woman as she took off her things, and after placing them on the bed, took a seat opposite the visitor. "If they knew what I have done they would kill me. I wanted to have a long talk with you, and that is the reason that I have brought you here."

"Did you put the note of warning into my hand?" Foss inquired when the woman stopped for a few minutes.

"Yes."

"I can't understand why you should take an interest in me?"

"You will understand everything in a little while. It would have been well for you to have heeded my warning, but since you would not do it, I will tell you what I have brought you here for, and then perhaps you will listen to my advice."

"May I inquire what your name is?"

"It makes no difference what my name is; to know it would do you no good."

"Why not?"

"Don't question me any more or try to inquire into my personality, for I will not tell you, but listen attentively to what I have got to say."

"Go on then and I will listen."

"About five years ago you rendered me a great service and saved my life. I will not say what this was, but I will tell you that I was very thankful to you, and I made up my mind that if ever I could be of any help to you I would try and repay the debt I owed you."

"I don't remember what this was."

"Never mind. It so happened this afternoon that I found out that your life was in danger, and I immediately set out to warn you."

"For which service I am grateful to you."

"When I wrote the note and commenced to watch your house I was running a great risk of being discovered, but I determined to use every precaution, and at last I succeeded in placing the note into your hand. I had hoped that you would take heed, and was surprised when I saw you in the saloon."

"I was doing my duty, and the greatest kind of danger will not deter me from carrying out my plans of running to earth the men I am after."

"You're foolish. A plan has been set on foot to kill you, and it was to ask you to leave the city that I have brought you here."

"I will not leave the city, or give up the cases that I have taken hold of."

"Your house is being watched night and day, and every place you go you are spotted."

"I can change my place of residence, and still go on with my work."

"That will be impossible. Even now I am afraid that you and I were followed. It was to throw any spy that might be spotting us off the scent that I took the trouble that I did."

"Don't your companions know of this place?"

"No; I have kept it a secret from every one; and here we are perfectly safe."

"Well, I can't leave the city."

"Then there is no telling when you will be killed."

"Tell me why Suggs and Cole desire to put me out of the way."

"You know their names?"

"I do."

"The reason why they want to get rid of you is because you are in their way."

"How so?"

"I can't tell you any more."

"But I can make you, if I choose."

"No, you can't."

"I can arrest you."

"But you won't."

This was said in such a way that for some minutes the detective was silent, and sat staring at the woman, study-

ing her face and trying to think where he had seen her before. The woman bore his gaze without flinching, and then, when she saw the puzzled look upon Foss' face, she burst out laughing, and exclaimed:

"It is useless for you to think where you have seen me, Mr. Foss."

So sudden was this, that the detective started, and looked at the woman in amazement. She had read his thoughts.

"I know exactly what you are thinking about; I read it in your face. I have told you all that I possibly can; and now do listen to me, and leave the city to-night."

"I can't, and I won't do it."

"Then I can do nothing more for you."

"Tell me about Cole and Suggs."

"I won't."

"Then I will arrest you."

Foss arose from his chair and stepped towards the woman. In an instant she pulled a small pistol from her pocket and pointed it at the detective's head, saying:

"Stop where you are, Mr. Foss."

The detective obeyed, for he was in the woman's power. She had him covered, and from her manner he saw that she would not hesitate to fire if he disobeyed her command. When he stopped the woman said:

"Now, Mr. Foss, let me tell you one thing. You can't arrest me legally, for I have done nothing wrong, and——"

"I——"

"Hold on a minute, and listen to what I have to say."

"Go on then."

"You don't know of anything against me. I have done you nothing but a kindness, and you ought to be ashamed to act as you have just done."

The detective saw that he had done wrong. If he had not threatened the woman he would very likely have gotten more out of her than he did. If he had acquiesced in all that she had said, she might have told him about the plans of Cole and Suggs. He hardly knew how to act now. At last he thought that he would try and gain the woman's good will, and said as he turned and resumed his seat:

"I have acted harshly; I beg your pardon."

"I thought you would come to your proper senses."

"While I was standing I thought over all that you have said, and I have come to the conclusion that I will leave the city."

The woman lowered her pistol and turning her gaze full on the detective scanned his face long and intently. Foss was prepared for this, and after some minutes he saw that she had learned nothing. She drew a long sigh, and said:

"Do you mean what you say?"

"I do."

"Then it is well. Where do you intend to go to?"

"Perhaps to New York."

"Then you will let the Howland and the forgery cases drop?"

"I shall."

"You have been appointed to work up the Howland case; what do you suppose that the authorities will do when they find out that you have disappeared?"

"I suppose that they will put some one else on the case. But why do you mention these cases? Have Cole and Suggs anything to do with them?"

The woman saw that the detective had been able to get out of her some information, and that she had made a mistake in questioning him, so she replied:

"I know nothing about the plans of Messrs. Suggs or Cole any more than that they and a number of others have banded together with the intention of killing you, as I told you before."

The detective saw that the woman was not telling the truth, and that she knew more about the plans of the men than she cared to tell. He said nothing to show her that he doubted what she said, however, and remained silent to see what she would say next. In a short time the woman continued:

"Now that you have concluded to leave the city, and now that I have warned you, you must go, for I have got to meet the men at another saloon in a short time."

"Where is the place you are going to after you leave this building?"

"It will do you no good to know."

"I——"

Squeak! Squeak!

The detective stopped in what he was about to say, and stood as silent as a statue listening. He thought that he had heard footsteps in the hall outside of the door, as if some one had been listening, and had that moment changed the position in which he was standing. He knew by the noise that it must be a man, for no woman would have tread so heavily. The noise was not repeated, and then the woman asked:

"Why did you stop short in what you were going to say?"

"I thought I heard footsteps in the hall."

"I didn't hear anything. I guess you only imagined it."

"I am confident that I was not deceived."

"We will see."

The woman now took her pistol in her hand, and walking to the door, she turned the key in the lock, and then, after opening it, looked out into the hall. The light from the room lit up the hall, and then the woman said, after she had searched every nook and corner with her eyes:

"There is no one here. You were mistaken."

"Who has the front rooms?"

"No one; they are vacant."

"Are the doors unlocked?"

"No."

"Who has the keys?"

"I have."

"Could not a person enter the rooms and hide there?"

"I don't know; but I will search the room if you desire."

"I think it is best."

Accordingly the woman took the light from the table, and she and the detective went to search the room. They found no one, and, as it was near midnight, Foss turned to the woman and said:

"I will go home now, and as soon as I get my things packed I will leave the city."

"You are doing well. Good-night."

"Good-night."

The woman went into her room, and Foss walked down the stairs. He had no intention of leaving the city, but intended to go home, pack a trunk with rubbish, have it taken to the depot the next morning, and arrange for it to be checked to New York.

If he were watched he would take the train and, after riding a short distance, get off and come back to the city in a new disguise. This would throw the woman and his enemies off of the scent. While he was busily engaged in thinking over his plans, he kept on descending the stairs until he reached the lower hall, which was not lighted. The detective took a parlor-match from his pocket and struck it on the wall. When it blazed up he saw that the front door was straight ahead of him, and, holding the match up so that he could see, he walked quickly towards the front of the hall.

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

HENS WITH FOUR LEGS COMMAND A HIGH PRICE

That four-legged hens are worth $36, or $9 a leg, and considered as real estate, was proved when a conveyance disposing of a four-legged biddy at this price was filed for registry in Honolulu, Hawaii. The bill of sale contained clauses relinquishing the dower of the wife of the seller. Further, the bill of sale grants title to the buyer and "his heirs and assigns forever." The buyer of the four-legged hen was Charles L. Hook, clerk of the Bureau of Conveyances. The sellers were Mow Wah Chan and Yam Yuk, his wife. In spite of the fact that it is a freak, the hen lays a perfectly good egg every day, the owner claims.

TOMATO "ONCE LOVE APPLE"

The tomato, wholesome, toothsome, capable of such variety of edible use as it is, was not found out by man until comparatively recent times. It is a native of western South America, whence it was introduced and cultivated in Europe during the sixteenth century.

At first its wrinkled fruits were regarded with suspicion and it was grown to be looked at as a curiosity more than anything else. Cultivation smoothed out the wrinkles and developed the tomato so that in the eighteenth century both yellow and red varieties were known.

There are old people, now living to-day, who relate that in their childhood the tomato was known as the "love apple" and was poisonous if eaten too much of.

BIRDS BIGGER IN NORTH

A naturalist named Boettichu has been making some curious observations upon the size of non-migratory birds of the same species in different climates.

The raven is larger in Norway and Greenland than in Central Europe; in Spain it is smaller. Similarly the crowd is much larger in Siberia, Kamchatka and Mongolia than in Western Europe.

The magpie is largest is Thibet and North America and smallest in Northern Africa. The wren is larger the further north one finds it.

Other birds follow this law, with a few exceptions; one of these is the sparrow, one kind of which is found both in France and Persia and is larger in the latter country.

CIRCUMVENTING CAR THIEVES

After considerable consideration and discussion the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce has come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a lock that will absolutely prevent the stealing of an automobile; the best that can be looked for, it was believed, is so much trouble for the would-be thief that he will be discouraged because of the chances of detection while trying to circumvent the lock. The consensus of opinion was that the best kind of a lock is one that locks the gearset and the next the lock that prevents the use of the steering gear. The suggestion was made that a bill of sale containing a complete detailed description should be given to the purchaser of a car, to be transferred in case of the transfer of the car to a new owner, this document furnishing means for identifying the machine in case of theft.

LONDON-CAPE TOWN AIR FLIGHT

During the next few months the British Air Ministry propose an experimental flight from London to Cape Town. Exploration parties are out on the road fixing upon stops and petrol stations, which as far as can be arranged will be about 400 miles apart. The route selected will probably be: London, Paris, Marseilles, Naples, Crete, Egypt, Nile Valley, Northern Rhodesia, Victoria Falls, Johannesburg and Cape Town, a distance of some 7,800 miles. It is expected that a Handley-Page machine similar to that which carried General Salmond from Egypt to India will be used.

CHICK HAS FOUR LEGS

A chick with four legs is the freak which hatched out in a brood of biddies for Lillie Murrill, colored, of Savannah. The management of a local restaurant has secured the chicken and has it on exhibition for a few days. Shortly the eating place may be expected to advertise "Fried chicken, Georgia Style, four drumsticks to a chicken. Our special." The occurrence is attributed to the egg having two yolks. While double yolked eggs are not such a rarity, four legged chickens are unusual. They seldom ever appear. The little chick with the extra legs presents a curious appearance. The extra pair are set tandem fashion to his better pair, but appear to be set on backward. They are attached to the body just back of the good pair, and appear quite as useless to him as they are extraordinary. Though few four legged chickens live for any time, this one is now going on two weeks old and appears strong and healthy.

NEW YORK ONCE A COLLECTION OF HUTS

In 1614 the future city of New York consisted of four rude huts occupying a site at what is now 41 Broadway. These were the only habitations of white men on Manhattan Island. The first ships trading to Manhattan were the *Fortune* and the *Tiger*, Amsterdam vessels brought over by Hendrick Christiansen and Adrien Block. The *Tiger* was accidentally burned at Manhattan in 1613. Block then constructed the first vessel built on the island, the *Onrust*, of 18 tons, which was launched near the Battery in the spring of 1914. In this tiny ship he passed Hell Gate and coasted along as far as Nahant Bay. In 1614 Christiansen went up the Hudson to Castle Island, below Albany, and built Fort Nassau, a trading house 36 by 26 feet in a stockade 58 feet square, with a moat 18 feet in width. In October, 1614, the Dutch states-general gave the name of New Netherlands to the country around Manhattan Island, and granted its trade by a special charter to Amsterdam merchants. Christiansen was killed by Indians in 1615. In 1623 thirty families of French Protestant refugees arrived, twenty-two families settling on Long Island, at the Wallabout, Brooklyn, and the remainder near Fort Orange. Three years later Peter Minuit arrived and completed that famous deal by which Manhattan Island, "rocky and full of trees," was ceded by the Indians to the Dutch for $24 worth of trinkets.

THOUSANDS WATCH CROSS ON MOON

A great silver cross—upright and crosspiece centred on the moon—hung in the eastern sky more than an hour the other night, making an unusual and rarely beautiful spectacle.

And those who may have thought that New York has eyes only for things close to earth might have changed their opinion if they could have seen the thousands of persons who were gazing upward from sidewalk and window.

The moon was itself a ball of pale silver, rolling high behind intermittent clouds. And the sharply marked outlines of the cross were of even paler silver.

Reports from various parts of Manhattan agreed that the cross was first seen about 8.30. It was visible until shortly before 10 o'clock, when it slowly faded, the left arm of the cross-bar and the lower half of the upright apparently disappearing first.

Later the moon became the bull's-eye, as it were, of a beautiful rainbow target, all the colors being clearly, even brilliantly displayed in wide rings around the silver centre.

So many men and women stood in the roadway at Broadway and 110th Street that the police had difficulty handling the traffic. The promenades of the bridges were also vantage points from which to watch what to some may have seemed a holy symbol in the heavens.

At the United States Weather Bureau the phenomenon was explained as an imperfect lunar halo caused by the refraction—or bending—of rays of light by icy particles in high flying clouds.

STRANGE CUSTOMS OF HEAD-HUNTERS

Picture a man whose long hair is done up in a Psyche knott, with a bandeau of beads around his head; then add to this the heavy features, full beard and mustache of a swarthy barbarian, and one has some idea of the appearance of a warrior-type of the northern part of the Island of Luzon.

These men pertain to the fierce tribes of head-hunters and their elaborate dressing of the hair, which in civilized countries is considered a purely feminine vanity, seems grotesquely incongruous with their savage pursuits. Not being obliged to waste any time on their wardrobes, since clothing is practically unknown, all their efforts toward adornment are devoted to the head and are much more elaborate than those of the women.

The dandy of the Kalinga tribe bangs his hair heavily over the forehead, training it so that it has almost the effect of a low pompadour. Above this is built a structure of feathers and flowers, the latter branching out and drooping quite artistically over each side. At the back his hair is arranged to hang long and flowing or is put up in a chignon. His ears have enormous holes in which are plugs of wood fancifully carved. Sometimes many strings of beads are about the neck, and the face and chest are tattoed, but the main efforts at adornment are directed at the hair.

A little cap woven of bamboo, about the size of the "pill box" of Tommy Atkins, is often worn on the back of the head to cover the coil of the hair. Boudoir caps trimmed with pink ribbons have not yet penetrated the interior of Luzon, but if they ever do it is safe to say that they immediately will be appropriated by these warriors, to the entire exclusion of the feminine contingent.

The wearing of false hair is allowed the women. These additional locks are in every case the hair of their ancestors. A wife of a Kalinga chief is described as wearing quite a towering superstructure of false hair surmounted by flowers and feathers. Around her neck are many strings of large, rough agate beads. Agate is highly prized among these people, and the larger and rougher in surface the better. A string of such beads holds, in comparison, something of the same value as the rope of pearls of the society dame. The Kalinga woman of the beads held the rank of queen among her people, hence her right to the necklace and the abundance of false hair.

THE CURIOUS LITTLE MOLE

It appears that among common animals few have been less studied in their life history than the mole. Accordingly, a British scientist has turned his attention to the mole, with the result that some interesting data concerning this queer creature have been collected.

Under the edifice that the mole constructs above the surface of the ground will always be found a series of tunnels. A curious feature, almost invariably found, is a perpendicular run penetrating about a foot below the bottom of the nest and then turning upward to meet another run. A mole is never, it is said, found in his nest, although it may be yet warm from his body when opened. Guided by smell and hearing, a mole frequently locates the nest of a partridge or pheasant above his run and, penetrating it from below, eats the eggs. The adult mole is practically blind, but there are embryonic indications that the power of sight of the race has deteriorated.

The mole at work presents an interesting sight. His nose sinks into the soil as if it were a brad awl with a half boring, half pushing motion, and in a twinkling half the creature's head is buried from view. Then up comes his powerful right foot, sliding close along the side of his nose. The foot, which is a kind of fine pointed chisel, cuts the earth vertically until it extends as far forward as his short reach will permit, then with a rapid motion he pries the earth sidewise from his nose and so makes an opening. Very quickly the left foot performs the same operation on the other side, and meanwhile the gimlet pointed nose has continued to bore.

In a few seconds his body is entirely out of sight, and only his queer little tail is visible. In three minutes, it is said, a mole will tunnel for a distance of a foot if he be in the least hurry to go about his business.

A naturalist once conceived the notion of ascertaining the amount of work a mole could accomplish in a given time. Accordingly the experimenter turned a large specimen loose in the middle of a five acre field. Five seconds, it is stated, after this mole had received its freedom it had burrowed out of sight, and the observer with his assistants, after driving a stake at the starting point, retired and left the little digger hard at work.

The start was made at eleven o'clock in the morning and the direction taken was in the east. By six o'clock in the evening this mole is said to have dug some twenty-three feet in an irregular course, keeping, however, in the same general direction and not attempting any side galleries. Twenty-four hours after the start the tunnel had been driven thirty-one feet farther, with a number of side galleries, and four feet had been added at the extremity, making sixy-eight feet of the main line and thirty-six and a half feet of branches, or a total of 104½ feet of tunnels dug in twenty-five hours!

The bottom of the tunnels ran very evenly, about four inches below the surface. At certain points the hole was elliptical in shape, measuring one and a half inches in width by two inches in height, and sometimes it was triangular, measuring two inches each way. The surface of the ground was usually cracked and raised about an inch along the course of the tunnel.

OHIO CLAIMS LARGEST ELM TREE

The largest elm tree in the United States is in Rathbone, near Marietta, according to tree experts. It is 32 feet in circumference and is estimated to be from 500 to 700 years old. The tree has a spread of 165 feet and has five limbs branching out from the main trunk as large as ordinary trees. Has New England an elm tree to equal it?

Another famous tree in Ohio, a sycamore, was located about one mile below Beverly on the Muskingum River. Records collected by the Department of Forestry at the Ohio Experiment Station show that an early French traveller made notes of the tree because of its amazing size. His records shows that in 1802 the tree was 47 feet in circumference and that Gen. George Washington had also made notes concerning the tree in his early travels into what was then known as the West. During the latter part of the nineteenth century the tree became hollow to such an extent that one could stand inside the cavity and turn an 11-foot rail around in it. The tree lost many of its branches before it disappeared beneath waters of the Muskingum during the cave-in of the bank in 1904.

Early records show that many gigantic walnut trees were in the forest around this immense sycamore. Many of them were so large that when lying on the ground they could be chinned by a man. Much of the early fence between Beverly and Marietta was constructed from walnut rails which were made from these trees.

THE FATHER OF MODERN SOCIALISM

This year marks the 102d anniversary of Socialism as it is accepted to-day, since it was in 1817 that Robert Owen laid his plan for a socialistic community before the committee on the poor law of the House of Commons. Owen's scheme came to nothing, in its immediate effects, but it started an agitation which never ceased from that day on, and which has culminated in the present German Government. In 1817 the socialistic propaganda was also launched in France, under the leadership of the Comte de Saint Simon. But his form of socialism, as that of Owen, while claiming many adherents, eventually passed into the discard, and both were replaced by the "scientific and revolutionary" socialism of the German school, headed by Karl Marx. This is the socialism which the world now knows.

Karl Marx, the German Jew who fathered the modern Socialistic school, died thirty-six years ago. He had many great associates and successors in carrying on the socialistic propaganda, including Friederich Engels, Ferdinand Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, the latter the father of Dr. Karl Liebknecht, who for years was a leader in German Socialist affairs, but developed Bolshevist tendencies as a result of the war and was murdered in the streets of Berlin only a short time ago. Marx is honored as the founder and father of the modern movement and he was undoubtedly the ablest of the pioneers who endured imprisonment in Prussian prisons for "the cause." Marx's great work, "Capital," is the so-called "Bible of Socialism," and the bitterest critics of the Marxian creed admit that it is a monumental work.

Marx and other German pioneers were often imprisoned and expelled from the country, but they continued their work in England. Half a century ago the Social Democrats returned five members to the North German Diet, and every year after that their membership increased until, at the beginning of the war, the Socialists were numerically more powerful than all the other German parties put together. Under the old system of government, however, the Socialists in the Reichstag, in spite of their numerical superiority, could do little more than talk and agitate. To-day the German Government is in their control, with Friederich Ebert, a former saddler, at the helm of the badly battered German ship of state.

NEW CURE FOR MORPHINE HABIT

It is common knowledge that a person addicted to the use of morphine may gradually increase the dose so that in a few months he may take with impunity a dose that originally would have been fatal. In other words, he establishes an immunity to the drug; and it seems probable, writes Dr. C. S. Bluemel in the *Journal* of the American Medical Association, that the immunity is due to the presence of an antibody or antitoxin in the blood.

When later the morphine is withdrawn the antibody remains in the blood unneutralized, and, according to the theory that is generally accepted, it is this antibody that gives rise to the characteristic symptoms of nervousness, leg pains, sweating, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, etc. These symptoms are relieved when morphine is administered.

It is evident that some form of toxin is present, and the withdrawal symptoms of sweating, vomiting and diarrhoea would indicate that the body is endeavoring to eliminate it.

My faith has been largely in elimination, and the idea suggested itself to me that elimination could be greatly augmented by injecting a salt solution into the veins.

The intravenous solution would dilute the toxins of the blood stream. To illustrate this mathematically: A man weighing 140 pounds would have approximately seven pints of blood, and an intravenous infusion of two pints of saline solution would dilute the toxins of the blood to approximately three-fourths of their original concentration. From this diluting of the toxins one would expect to see an amelioration of the withdrawal symptoms. The dilution would, of course, be temporary, for additional toxins would pass to the blood stream from the body tissues, but these toxins would in turn be eliminated with the excess fluid.

On these purely theoretical considerations I decided to attempt the treatment of chronic morphinism solely by elimination.

The treatment of a case is typically as follows: The patient is put to bed and his morphine stopped entirely. He is put on a semi-solid or a liquid diet, and is given cathartics. The patient receives from two to four intravenous infusions a day, according to his condition. The standard infusion consists of 1,000 c.c. (almost two quarts) of 0.9 per cent sodium chloride in sterile freshly distilled water.

During the first few days of treatment the patient is given enough chloral at bedtime to insure a night's sleep. Hypnotics are an important element in the treatment, for the sleep they induce not only blots out large periods of discomfort, but also fortifies the patient mentally and physically.

The semi-solid or the liquid diet is continued as long as the patient feels any nausea, and he is kept in bed until all acute discomfort from the withdrawal of the morphine has disappeared.

Patients have suffered no ill effects from receiving three or four infusions daily for a period of a week or more. One patient received infusions in thirteen days amounting to 50 per cent. of her body weight, and her physical condition improved.

As an instance, a man who had used morphine for eleven years and was taking eight or ten grains a day hypodermically, received ten infusions over a period of five days. He had no trouble at any time with insomnia, and was discharged on the thirteenth day.

THROWN ALIVE INTO CESSPOOLS

A Russian volunteer soldier who took part in the battle of Perm has related in Omsk, Siberia, what he saw in the village of Kouvchine, not far from Perm, where he was stationed during the fighting which resulted in the complete defeat of the Bolsheviki.

He was ordered to clean out three cesspools which were filled with corpses of people who apparently belonged to the intellectual or cultivated class of the community. Many of the bodies bore wounds made with swords. He removed thirty corpses from the first pit, ages of the victims ranging from sixteen to sixty years.

There were several young women among the victims. All the bodies were naked. There was reason to believe, in the soldier's opinion, that many were thrown into the pits still alive and died by slow suffocation and from effects of their wounds.

The inhabitants of the village were so terrified that they acted like insane persons. When the Siberians came as victors and the town bells rang out the people jumped for joy, clasping hands and skipping around in circles.

In the neighboring village of Gornozavadsk, situated on a railroad, the people were found to be absolutely without nourishment, and the condition of the children was pitiable.

TRINIDAD'S ASPHALT LAKE

Every year 300,000 tons of asphalt are taken from the famous "pitch lake" on the island of Trinidad. This has been going on for a very long time, supplying material for the paving of streets all over the world; yet the quantity of asphalt remaining in the lake has not been the least diminished. It is one of the wonders of the world, and scientists of late have been making a special study of it in an effort to find out the origin of the deposit and why and how it renews itself.

The lake is nearly circular in shape, three miles in circumference and more than 140 feet deep. To sound it farther has been impracticable, because the stuff down below is so soft that the drills would not "stay put." It really is a lake, in no way different from any other except that it is of asphalt instead of water. Waves it has, and they are in motion, washing up on its shores, but one cannot see them move. A chip thrown into the middle of the lake may be cast up on shore a year or two later.

The surface looks like an old, broken-down pavement, full of cracks and depressions, with pools of water here and there, and occasional clumps of vegetation that have sprouted from bits of soil. Imagine the hottest place on earth—for Trinidad is all of that—and figure to yourself a neglected area of asphalt paving extending over 114 acres. You will thus get the picture. The stuff is too gummy and tough for excavating by machine, so it has to be dug out with picks and loaded on cars that carry it to the shore of the lake. Thence it is transported half a mile to the seashore by bucket conveyers and dumped into ships.

In the hold of the ship it soon settles into a gummy solid on the voyage, so that it has to be dug out with picks again. Too soft to be handled as a solid and too solid to be dealt with as a fluid, it is one of the most difficult of substances to manage. Delivered at a refinery, it is melted by high heat, and the dirt and vegetable matter being lighter rise to the surface. These extraneous matters being removed, it is ready for paving purposes.

The Island of Trinidad is off the northeasternmost point of South America, being separated from the coast of Venezuela by a strait six miles wide. It belongs to Great Britain, and the American company that "farms" the asphalt pays to the British crown a royalty of so much per ton.

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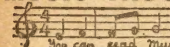

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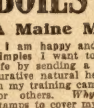

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